UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

INCLUDING AFRICENTRISM IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AT THE GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION

A Final Document Submitted to the Doctoral Studies Committee of United Theological Seminary Dayton, Ohio

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Ministry

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the memory of my father, the Reverend Dr. William Louis Blake, Sr., who physically departed from this life on December 8, 1994.

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Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright Jr., epitomizes the Africentric preacher and pastor. He creatively combines a brilliant, contagious intellect with practical skills essential to Black empowerment. His extraordinary ability to "re-contextualize" ideas and concepts infused the academic with relevance for ministry to the dispossessed. He led the Wright/Kunjufu Fellows to unfamiliar yet necessary terrain.

Dr. Wright has been a pastor to me during the past year. He has been helpful while I have dealt with the consequences of the unexpected dismantling of the Center For Urban-Black Studies. He encouraged me to continue in the Doctor of Ministry Program even though I no longer had that particular ministry or a stable source of income. His advocacy on my behalf has nurtured a sense of hopefulness in me. I am indeed grateful for his presence in my life.

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The Center for Urban-Black Studies

INTRODUCTION

> *If you do not understand White Supremacy — what it is, and how it works — everything else that you understand, will only confuse you.*[1]

An underlying premise of this work is that theological education at the Graduate Theological Union is symptomatic of the white supremacy to which Neely Fuller, Jr. referred. This is part of its inheritance as an American institution. Yet, it perpetuates this sin through the decisions it makes, actively and passively nurturing its virility. Unless this reality is understood, the continuation of its miseducating and ill preparing students for ministry will not be comprehended. The depth of racism in theological education is portrayed in the following:

> *Long after the doors of factories, offices and schools swung open to qualified Blacks, the walls of yet another elite, all-White club have crumbled. It's been more than a century in the making, but black religious scholars have finally gained entrance into one of the most sacred — and most segregated — institutions of them all; the executive chambers of predominantly White theological seminaries.*[2]

While celebrating the fact that Blacks have assumed leadership at predominantly white theological institutions, the article makes this contrast: "Although Blacks have made extraordinary steps in climbing the corporate ladder, it has taken many years more to reach the top rung in the religious world."[3] The article does not mention reasons other than white

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[1]Neely Fuller, Jr., "The United Independent Compensatory Code/System," in *The Isis Paper* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1991), Dedication.

[2]*Ebony*, March 1994, Vol. XLIX, No. 5, "Razing Religion's Last Barriers," Lisa Jones.

[3]Ibid., 94.

supremacy for the past exclusivity of predominantly white theological educational institutions. It does, however, explore reasons for the change.

> *Now religious experts say the White Church hopes these sage black clergymen will be the saviors of a somewhat ailing theological educational system, which has been hampered by declining enrollment, dwindling finances and dated curricula...*
>
> *Many of these schools look to African-American leadership as a salvation point, says Dr. James H. Costen, president of the Interdenominational Theological Center, a consortium of six black seminaries in Atlanta. "In many instances," he says, "White religious administrators recognize that Black scholars have the only game in town when it comes to sensitivity toward the urban environment and when it comes to developing practical approaches to the ministry and survival strategies in tough economic times. I don't think that these appointments are gifts," Dr. Costen contends. "They are recognition of leadership potential and salvation."*[4]

Salvation means change, conversion, moving in a new direction, and choosing that which gives life rather than that which destroys. It necessitates a profound reorientation of priorities, perspective, and methods of the past. It entails creating a new environment. It proclaims a different relationship to others and an end to suppositions of self-sufficiency and omniscience. It is admission of errors of the past and signals commitment to the future.

One of the new Seminary presidents, Dr. Daryl Ward of United Theological Seminary, stated: "If institutions want to say to previously excluded groups that we really want you, then they must first say to themselves what do we need to do to change."[5]

This is the problem: How to change the way seminaries educate. The challenge is to implant a new center in their being, one that is prophetic as well as priestly and pastoral, one that is supportive of the oppressed and excluded, and one that results from an informed understanding of the culture.

This calls upon theological educational institutions to cease being merely a tool of the culture, transmitting the culture's values and norms to the religious community. It is a

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[4]Ibid., 94-95.

[5]Ibid., 98.

different and difficult role for seminaries. It means venturing into unfamiliar territory and requires a reorientation.

Walter Brueggemann made the following assessment:

> *Perhaps the seminary also has been a place of too much certitude, ready to sing before we grieve over our own deep ambiguity. Perhaps the seminary too easily embraces the norms of the academy, because it is easier to follow the right forms than to face the raw substance never fully caught in form. Perhaps the seminary has come to terms too fully with economic sufficiency, when members of the seminary — faculty, students, and board — count too much on treasures that comfort the heart. (That also is a measure of our enmeshment). Perhaps the seminary has become too nearly a collection of "autonomous" believers, endlessly fascinated with ourselves and not very good at being the body of the one Lord. The voice of Rachel may be an imperative voice for our future.*[6]

Traditionally, theological educational institutions have not been prophetic. A prophetic stance would have undercut the vested interests and actions of their primary reference group: the white community and, more particularly, the white church. Consistently, the white church has sided with and facilitated the domination of whites over Blacks. Without its support racism would not, perhaps, have gained the moral strength and sanction it required to win the soul of America. In a chapter entitled "Mother of Racial Patterns," Kyle Haselden argues that the church not only absorbed societal racism, but was also the progenitor of this attitude and behavior.

> *As we look at the Christian church in the mirror of race, we are struck first by the obvious fact that it is a divided church, split cleanly and almost completely along racial lines. We must discover, therefore, whether the racially divided church is merely a victim of sociological pressures or whether the church has had a large hand in forming those patterns of segregation which are prevalent in society as well as those of which it is itself guilty...*
>
> *The existence of two churches distinguished by a racial line, has serious effects which we must consider later; but the fact that the line is drawn by the white man against the Negro constitutes the sin of segregation within the Christian church.*[7]

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[6]Walter Brueggemann, *Hope Within History* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987), 106.

[7]Kyle Haselden, *The Racial Problem in Christian Perspective* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), 23-24.

Haselden cites examples of integration in the ante-bellum church. This corroborates his point that decisions were made to segregate Christians based upon race. The most critical point is, however, that the church was not a helpless victim of the machinations of society.

> *What is of more interest to us is not the fact that there was a kind of integration in the ante-bellum church but the fact that segregation of the races had its beginning in the church quite as early as its emergence in secular society. Long before the little signs — "white only" and "colored" — appeared in the public utilities, they had appeared in the church... As the Negro membership grew in number, education, spirit, and independence, the color line was introduced. Negroes were assigned pews in the rear marked "B.M.," meaning BLACK MEMBERS, and there were discriminations at communion and baptismal font.*[8]

To a great extent, the Black Church owes its existence to racism within the white church. Haselden ends his chapter with the indictment, "we know that for many years to come we shall not have to ask what is the major disgrace of the Christian church in America."[9]

Additional evidence of the church's active participation in the design and implementation of racism is provided by H. Shelton Smith. His book, *In His Image, But...* reveals numerous accounts of the white church's failure to act justly toward Blacks.

> *Precisely what attitude the clergy generally took toward slavery in seventeenth-century Anglo-America is largely conjectural, because of the paucity of documentary evidence. But by the early decades of the next century, when printed sermons and tracts on the subject began to appear in considerable numbers, it is clear that church leaders, with rare exceptions, viewed Negro bondage as compatible with the Christian faith. Nor was his notion peculiar to the South or to any particular religious tradition.*[10]

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[8]Ibid., 27-29.

[9]Ibid., 33.

[10]H. Shelton Smith, *In His Image, But... Racism in Southern Religion, 1790-1910* (Duke University Press, 1972), 4.

Quakers are often commended for their leadership in the abolition of slavery. They were in the forefront of efforts to erase this blot from the fabric of American society; yet, they were not always so inclined.

> *...up until the eve of the American Revolution many, if not most, of the prosperous Friends in all the colonies still held slaves. Unlike churchmen in most of the other denominations, Quakers did not publish pamphlets or sermons in support of slavery, but the fact that they bought and kept Negroes spoke more loudly than the printed word. Since Pennsylvania was Quaker-ruled throughout the first half of the eighteenth century, its sentiment on slavery would seem to be representative of Quakerism in general. In any case, William Penn, founder of the "holy experiment" on the Delaware, was still a slave owner at his death in 1718. During the first third of the century, Philadelphia's Quaker merchants were busily engaged in importing and selling West Indian blacks, and some of them persisted in that trade well into the 1750's. According to a cautious historian, Friends were the principal slaveholders' in many sections of southeastern Pennsylvania. "At many different periods during the eighteenth century," he further observed, "(they) probably held from a half to a third of all the slaves in the colony."*[11]

While the Quakers did become more forthright and aggressively opposed to slavery, other churches refused to follow:

> *This brief survey reveals that with a few exceptions the American churches had come to terms with slavery by the 1830's. Despite antislavery professing in the immediate post-Revolution era, churches soon ceased in practice to be governed by them. Most denominations placated residual antislavery sentiment by labeling slavery an undesirable social institution that should be ended through ameliorative and gradualistic methods. Except for the Quakers and a few other small sects, no American religious denomination in existence during the first quarter of the nineteenth century challenged slave holding as inconsistent with Christian teachings.*[12]

George Kelsey probes the tenacity and profundity of racism by ascribing to it the character of faith, idolatrous faith.

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[11]Ibid., 6.

[12]John R. McKivigan, *The War Against Proslavery Religion: Abolitionism and the Northern Churches, 1830-1865* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 29.

> *By and large, Christians have failed to recognize racism as an idolatrous faith, even though it poses the problem of idolatry among Christians in a way that no other tendency does. Racism is especially problematical not only because of the peculiar nature of the racist faith, but because it is a "Trojan horse" with organized Christianity and Christian civic communities.*
>
> *First, I am convinced that Christian faith provides authentic answers to the questions which racism poses but to which racism is able to provide only false answers. Second, racism is a phenomenon of modern Christian civilization. By and large, the people who have been the racist of the modern world have also been Christians or the heirs of Christian civilization.*[13]

Many leaders of the white churches who have professed a concern for the rights of Blacks have also attempted to set the timetable. Martin Luther King, Jr., denounced the paternalism, timidity, and hypocrisy of such actions in his "Letter from Birmingham Jail."

> *"We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct-action campaign that was 'well timed' in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word 'Wait!' It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This 'Wait' has almost always meant 'Never.' We must come to see, with one of our distinguished jurists, that 'justice too long delayed is justice denied.'"*
>
> *"We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God-given rights."*
>
> *"We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co-workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right. Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy and transform our pending*

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[13]George Kelsey, *Racism and the Christian Understanding of Man* (New York: Scribner, 1965), 9-10.

national elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. Now is the time to lift our national policy from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of human dignity."[14]

This abdication of responsibility to act positively and timely in creating human community is not limited to the church in the South. It has been a characteristic of the church as a whole. Dr. Howard Thurman sheds light on this subject in his book *Luminous Darkness:*

I do not wish to suggest that there are not many who are participating in the social struggle inspired to do so by deep religious convictions. But my insistence that the church has lost the initiative to inspire such behavior in our society. The image of the church is so damaged that at the moment it does not provide an effective rallying point.[15]

He expands his insights with the following observations:

Historically in this country, the church has given the sweep of its moral force to the practice of segregation within its own community of believers. To the extent to which this has been done, the church has violated one of the central elements in its own commitment. It has dared to demonstrate that the commitment is not central, that it does not believe that Christians are bound to love one another. If being Christian does not demand that all Christians love each other and thereby become deeply engaged in experiencing themselves as human beings, it would seem futile to expect that Christians would be concerned about the secular community in its gross practices of prejudice and discrimination.

On the other hand, if Christians practiced brotherhood among Christians, this would be one limited step in the direction of a new order among men. Think of what this would mean. Wherever one Christian met or dealt with another Christian, there would be a socially redemptive encounter.[16]

The relationship between the religion of Jesus and Black life is further commented upon by Thurman:

I can count on the fingers of one hand the number of times that I have heard a sermon on the meaning of religion, of Christianity, to the man who stands with his back against the wall. It

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[14]Martin Luther King, Jr., *Why We Can't Wait* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 82-83, 89-90.

[15]Howard Thurman, *The Luminous Darkness* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965).

[16]Ibid., 104-105.

is urgent that my meaning be crystal clear. The masses of men live with their backs constantly against the wall. They are the poor, the disinherited, the dispossessed. What does our religion say to them? The issue is not what it counsels them to do for others whose need may be greater, but what religion offers to met their own needs. The search for an answer to this question is perhaps the most important religious quest of modern life.[17]

The religion of Jesus addresses concrete needs.

I do not ignore the theological and metaphysical interpretation of the Christian doctrine of salvation. But the underprivileged everywhere have long since abandoned any hope that this type of salvation deals with the crucial issues by which their days are turned into despair without consolation. The basic fact is that Christianity as it was born in the mind of this Jewish teacher and thinker appears as a technique of survival for the oppressed. That it became, through the intervening years, a religion of the powerful and the dominant, used sometimes as an instrument of oppression, must not tempt us into believing that it was thus in the mind and life of Jesus...[18]

If theological educational institutions are to be saved and empower Black people, they must address the historical and contemporary betrayal as well as embrace the challenge of a different world view that calls for restructured relationships.

This is an invitation to relevance. It lays claim upon reality and seeks to expand the texts and contexts of theological educational institutions. Positive response to this challenge would promote rather than obstruct: "The finding of one's voice or locating the center of one's internal authority system in the presence of a different external authority system."[19] Dr. James H. Evans, Jr., discusses this need for authenticity while examining the relationship of Black Church studies to theological education. Black Church studies was conceived as the consequence of impassioned intercourse regarding the status of Black America and the responsibility of seminaries to respond to its cry for deliverance. It underscored the

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[17]Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited* (New York: Abingdo-Cokesbury Press), 13.

[18]Ibid., 29-30.

[19]James H. Evans, Jr., "I Rose and Found My Voice," in *Theological Education*, Spring 1985, Vol. XXI, No. 2 (Vandalia, Ohio: The Association of Theological Schools), 49.

frightening fact that seminary graduates were ignorant of the pervasiveness and obstinacy of racism in American society. They were not prepared, therefore, to provide effective leadership. Appropriate theological education is characterized by its redress of the reality of oppression in which Black people have found and still find themselves. Analysis and praxis are undertaken not as ends in themselves, but, as means to the goal of liberation.

> *A liberating analysis is one which is directed toward the deliverance of African American experience from the corruption of neglect and willful misinterpretation. This is the reason that Black religious history was one of the first disciplines to arise out of the turbulence and reawakening of the 1960's. A critical praxis is one directed toward the destruction of the situation of oppression.*[20]

A reclaimed past is essential to the liberating process. This process includes understanding history as a tool for supporting the mythology of those in power. This mythology was not intended to inspire the oppressed with their potential for freedom and empowerment. It sanctions their oppression and fosters social Darwinism — the survival of the fittest — at the expense of the most unfit, the least of these my sisters and brothers.

Evans names two significant steps in the reclamation process: (1) revalorization of the African past; (2) placing the creation of slavery in its proper cultural context. Altered perspectives are derived from such a process. Africa is reassessed for its tremendous positive impact on the human sojourn, including its role in nurturing Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Slave religion is interpreted in the context of socioeconomic as well as political oppression. It emerged in response to the forces of enslavement in a nation purportedly concerned with the rights and welfare of its people.

Dr. John Kinney, Dean, Virginia Union University, School of Theology, argues for the inclusion of Africalogical Theism in theological education. Aware of the difficulty of

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[20]James H. Evans, Jr., "Black Church Studies and the Theological Curriculum," *African American Religious Studies*, Gayraud S. Wilmore, Ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 26.

incorporating that perspective into the life of the seminary, Kinney suggests presenting it as an example of the devolution of the church. Eurocentric professors are familiar with this concept. Devolution is the Church's coming out from under authorities. Much of theology, he postulates, is reflection upon reflection upon reflection about what happened to someone else; e.g., what happened to Paul on the Damascus Road. It is often lifeless refusal to be accountable for one's own thoughts.

Kinney also supports the concept of revalorization of the past. In addition to assigning new value to one's legacy and self, it entails redefining one's authorities, the ones to whom one listens.

A third concept that Kinney illuminates is that of deconstruction or the insurrection of subjugated knowledge. Previously voiceless people are being heard. Africentricity is a particularized expression of the rise of local theologies.[21]

If theological education is to be effective in preparing persons to minister to those communities in insurrection it must be attuned to locating and hearing their cries, on street corners as well as in churches and in rap music as well as in hymns. Ministry to Black people entails being immersed in the prism of Black cultural life.

The Model of Ministry presented in this document is an attempt to assist the Graduate Theological Union in becoming more relevant and creatively responsive to the racism that is a part of its nature.

Chapter 1 is autobiographical. It provides a skeletal outline of my journey to the GTU as the director of one of its affiliates, the Center for Urban-Black Studies. It portrays awakenings to the systemic nature of racism and efforts to change society.

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[21]Dr. Kinney provided these insights during a brilliant lecture to the Wright/Kunjufu Fellows at United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio, January 1993.

Chapter 2 gives the socio-historical, ideological, and programmatic Context of Ministry of the Center and the GTU. Of primary concern is the inclusion or exclusion of insights from the Black religious experience in the GTU community. The evolution of the relationship between the Center (CUBS), the base for the Model of Ministry, and the GTU is depicted.

Chapter 3 introduces the Theological Foundations upon which the model is based: African Religious Heritage; Hebrew Scriptures; Jesus And His Religion; and The African American Religious Experience.

Chapter 4 explores Methodological Considerations. Methodology informs the content in Africentrism. Africentrism is concerned not only with religion but also with the African past, education, the unique and common afflictions of Black women and Black men. The chapter ends by defining the Africentric Church. In a sense it is preface to the final chapter.

Chapter 5 is the Presentation of The Model. It defines areas for Including Africentrism in Theological Education at the GTU. The chapter includes goals, implementation, results, and evaluation. During the process, the relationship between the Center and the GTU was terminated. Conclusions at the end of the document address the meaning of this.

Unlike most Models of Ministries, this one was not based in a church which could determine to a great deal the success of the model. Rather, it was based in an institution, CUBS, affiliated with another institution, GTU, comprised of many other institutions with varying levels of cooperation, authority, and accountability. CUBS, however, possessed no institutional power at the GTU in the sense of demanding or requiring the other institutions to behave in certain ways. It did not have the power to coerce them into implementing its

goals. Its power was relegated to persuasion and the ministries over which it had direct control.

The Model of Ministry was an awesome undertaking. Because the GTU considers itself the most inclusive theological educational institution in the world, I felt the imperative to address it. I have no regrets for taking on this task.

CHAPTER 1

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

> *Despite these gains, however, the battle for equal opportunity, especially in education, continued to be an uphill one. In 1949, for example, the Reverend William L. Blake, a twenty-nine year old black pastor of the Mount Zion Baptist Church in Liberty, Missouri was denied admittance to William Jewell College in Liberty.*[22]

The incident described above was my introduction to racism perpetrated by institutions of religion. I was not conscious of this at the time; for, I was only three-years old. Later, my father would explain the event. Our family had moved from Kansas City, Missouri, to Liberty in 1947 in order for my father to assume his first pastorate, First Baptist Church, Mount Zion District. Located fifteen miles north of Kansas City, Liberty had a population of approximately 3,000 people. As one of the two Black pastors, he was approached by students from William Jewell College (a Southern Baptist school) who were interested in the role of the Black church. Their interest and his own desires to resume his college education, that had been interrupted by World War II, prompted him to apply for admission to the college. Although having support from students, this initiative necessitated a visit from the president to the Blake home. My father was informed that his matriculation at William Jewell would drain him of resources needed to support his large family (my parents already had five children). My father informed him that the United States

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[22]Lorenzo Greene, Gary Kremer and Antonio F. Holland, "The Role of the Negro in Missouri History: 1719-1970," *Official Manual State of Missouri, 1973-1974* (Jefferson City and St. Louis, Missouri: Von Hoffman Press, Inc.), 24.

Government would pay the expenses as a benefit result from his military service. My father was then informed that he would not be admitted.

The rejection did claim media attention. Rockhurst College (a Jesuit school) invited him to join its student body. He became the first Black to graduate from that institution. It was the graduation from Rockhurst that people reflected upon. This emphasis on achieve ment despite obstacles characterized my childhood. It exuded from my parents, teachers, members of the church, and larger Black community.

The Blake children were children of the community. Although we had no biological relatives in Liberty, most of the adults were addressed by the titles Aunt and Uncle or Brother and Sister. This was a Black community that knew each child.

In subsequent years, I would hear discussions about Black people growing up with a sense of inferiority. While I am aware of how this routinely happens as a consequence of racism, it is not my story. I knew that I was somebody. This attitude was due to a great extent to my father's prominence, the care of my mother and larger community, and to my own experiences. I excelled at segregated Garrison Elementary School. There were three grades in the classroom and a great deal of concern for each student. I was often used to assist the teachers. School was something I enjoyed. It was understood as a vehicle to greater social inclusion and empowerment of the race.

Desegregation came initially through Little League Baseball. I excelled there. So even when employees of a sponsoring drug store refused to allow Glenn (Bugsy) — who was my Black playmate and the best player on the team — and me to sit at the counter to drink our sodas like the white boys, I knew it was not due to our inferiority. I was angry and knew that there was something strange about people who would accept your superior baseball talents, but rejected our right to be treated as an equal at a soda fountain.

When desegregation came to the Liberty school system, I embarrassed no one except those who believed in the inferiority of Black people. I wondered how people could have developed such an asinine theory. Facts just did not corroborate such beliefs.

There was another incident involving religion that disturbed me. A woman of German descent with the last name Takahashi lived just beyond the boundary of the Black community. She visited our church one Sunday, enjoyed the service, returned, and joined the church. Her action sent shock waves through the white community, particularly that of Second Baptist Church.

People wrote and called expressing their dismay, anger, and threats. She was forced to move to the periphery of Liberty.

Our family moved back to Kansas City during the summer of 1961. My father had been called as pastor of Highland Baptist Church. I was excited about living in the big city.

I was struck by the fact that my high school, Lincoln High, was all Black. For the past three years, I was usually the only Black student in my courses. Although the Kansas City public school system was desegregated by law (de jure), it was segregated in fact (de facto). This struck me as a step in the wrong direction. Nevertheless, the experience was a rewarding one.

The year 1963 brought many contradictions into focus. During the Spring, I had been selected by the National Science Foundation as one of fifty outstanding students gathered from five states who would participate in a special college summer session held at the University of Missouri, Columbia. We would study advanced chemistry and economics. Successful completion would result in eight college credits.

I was the only Black student. The group had an outing at a local beach. Again, I provided the only color and was quite aware of this. Near the end of the Summer, the counselor informed me that the students wanted to have another outing at the same place.

I was asked not to accompany them since my presence on the first trip had disturbed the local patrons. I wondered when the discussion had taken place, and was disturbed that the students and counselor could support such an activity.

The Summer of 1963 also witnessed the great March on Washington at which Martin Luther King, Jr. aroused the emotions of the nation with his speech, "I Have A Dream." The march was hailed by many as a symbol of America's freedom of speech, freedom to even protest. Within a month, four little Black girls were bombed to death while attending Sunday school at Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Years later, I would serve on the staff at this historic church.

The horror of the deaths of these children could not be erased from my memory. Neither could the fact that people were forced to march to Washington to claim rights that should have been theirs inherently. I had participated in the American Legion Oratorical Contest at Lincoln High the previous two years. When she inquired about my speech, I informed the sponsoring teacher that I would not participate. I could no longer reconcile the rhetoric of the United States Constitution — the subject of the speeches — and the reality of racial inequity. She responded by instructing me that if I did not enter the contest she would fail me. She told me that such a grade would seriously mar my exemplary record. One week before the deadline, she emphatically informed me that her threat was not a joke.

I entered the contest and won. I won the second round. A white girl won the subsequent round. I remember resenting being judged by an all-white jury.

My teacher's response had shocked me. I could not comprehend her inability to accept my disillusionment with the Constitution. At the time Kansas City did not even have a Black elected official. I worked to correct this by campaigning for Bruce Watkins, a Black man, who was running for city council. When I asked another student to help, she

stated that she was a Jehovah Witness; and, they did not believe in politics. How could a church, a whole denomination, not be concerned about politics? It was clear to me that we were all involved in politics one way or another. Either you determine politics or politics will determine you. Mr. Watkins was elected to the city council. Dr. Thomas, former principal at Lincoln, was elected to the board of education. Two weeks later President John Kennedy was assassinated. I did not know it at the time; but, the national turmoil was shaping the tapestry of ministry which I would later fashion.

I chose Brown University as my undergraduate college. It had an outstanding pre-medicine program. I had been impressed by the nobility of healing as demonstrated by our family doctor in Liberty. Dr. Willoughby, who was white, always treated me with dignity and promised to assist me financially in medical school if I needed it.

After two years in premed, I, like many others, switched majors. Brown had been the right choice. Its chaplains were fabulous. Chaplain Charlie Brown and Rev. Julius Scott, Jr. constantly provoked my compassion and indelibly imprinted upon me the critical importance of religion in creating a just society.

Chapel was so much a part of my consciousness as well as spirit that I visited few of the local churches. During my senior year, I served as president of both the Manning Chapel Board and the University Christian Movement. The people in the organizations were alive, constantly asking questions and searching for ways to translate beliefs about equality into reality.

It was through the Chaplain's Office that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was invited to Brown. King was the most eloquent and arresting embodiment of the prophetic ideal that I have personally encountered. His influence is very much a part of my ministry. His inspira tion helped pull together threads of prophetic ministry which had resided in me since childhood.

It was during the Spring semester of my junior year that he visited Brown. I was ushering and awaited his arrival with great anticipation. The time to begin the service was quickly approaching. Still, there was no Dr. King. Suddenly, a sense of presence that I had not experienced prior to this occasion engulfed me. I knew that he had arrived. I turned and sensed the presence of an extraordinary person, a prophet, an experience, a theophany.

In his address, Dr. King stated his opposition to the Vietnam War. It was the clearest reasoning on this subject that I had heard. King articulately tied together the problems of poverty, racism, and the war. He gave voice to the other, dispossessed America. I felt that I had to do likewise. I too was required to give witness to my opposition to the war. This led to my filing for conscientious objector status which was rejected by the Selective Service Board and participating in the March on the Pentagon (Fall, 1967) and the March on Washington sponsored by Clergy and Lay Against Vietnam (February, 1968). Formal protest is now an organic component of my lifestyle. Indeed, I have learned about numerous capital cities largely through demonstrations.

As graduation approached, I contemplated attending graduate school in community organizing or urban affairs. Either program would have been consistent with my interests and my major, sociology. A Black political science graduate student, William Brown, asked if I had thought about going to seminary. I told him "No." Ministers were too poorly paid and I had not received a calling. He indicated that I needed to think about it seriously because so much of what I had devoted my time and energies to pointed in that direction.

During the Fall semester of my Senior year, the University Christian Movement, Chapel Board, and the Afro American Society sponsored a panel discussion on the urban crisis. Rev. Herbert O. Edwards, a graduate student and Director of The Human Relations Commission of Providence, Rhode Island, gave an awesome presentation. His commitment to the Black Church added to a growing sense of exploring the seminary option.

While in the chaplain's office, I saw a pamphlet from Pacific School of Religion entitled: "The New Breed." It asked several questions about whether one would like to make a difference in the world. I answered affirmatively to all the questions. It then declared that those who had answered in such a way were part of the "new breed." It stated that some of the new breed were finding their way into Peace Corps, some into Vista, and some were going to seminary. It was a publication that spoke to my innermost feelings. I sensed that PSR was my destiny. It was the only theological educational institution to which I applied.

While the rhetoric was great, the reality of PSR was excruciatingly disappointing. The sense of community that permeated the religious organizations at Brown was absent. There was an appalling indifference to the movements that were afoot.

My matriculation began in September, 1968. Fortunately, I found employment with Rev. Cecil Williams at Glide Memorial United Methodist Church in San Francisco. The ministry was on the cutting edge. Rev. Williams had helped organize welfare mothers and the Officers for Justice — the Black caucus within the San Francisco Police Department. His ministry was particularly critical to the Tenderloin section of the city. Immediately, we became embroiled in the student protest at San Francisco State University where students had committed themselves to the creation of an Ethnic Studies Department. Students at the University of California followed with similar demands during the Winter Quarter. The challenges to European hegemony over education interrogated the validity and bankruptcy of education and, therefore, shook one of the pillars of American society.

I seemed to be living in two unrelated worlds. The ministry of Glide Church had provided affirmation of the importance and possibilities of ministry. It fit my passions and talents. Ministry spoke to me; yet, the education for ministry seemed so immaterial to the

demands of the time. PSR appeared insulated from the hurt and cries of those beyond "Holy Hill," ignorant of the Black Church, and afraid to be prophetic.

I considered transferring to Chicago Theological Seminary. In the midst of my frustration, however, there was a spirit at work. I was a member of the New Seminary Movement and the Third World Caucus at PSR. I also served as convener of the GTU Black Seminarians. Somehow, the confrontations with various educational institutions had not been totally ineffective. The following was noted in the minutes of the October 10, 1968 meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Graduate Theological Union, the theological consortium of which PSR is a member:

> *The GTU as a whole is beginning to address itself to the problem of minorities and particularly of the Black community in relation to theological education. The issue is not whether we should do something. The issue is that we must find the ways and the means. This must first and foremost involve conversations with the Black community.*[23]

On January 15, 1969 — Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday — the creation of the Center For Urban Black Studies was announced. The Center was a creative addition to the GTU. Courses, counseling, and a sense of community characterized it. Local Black clergy and Black seminarians were brought together to share insights, concerns, and ministries. It was through the Center that I was introduced to Dr. Howard Thurman and his writings. Course titles included: Pastor As Revolutionary, Pastor As Community Strategist; Blackness As A Discipline; Spiritual Discipline and Resources; and, numerous other courses. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Lecture Series was held annually. The Black Odyssey Festival was developed. An Urban-Black Semester was implemented. Different methodologies were employed. Classes were held at retreat centers allowing Black professors employed elsewhere to be utilized. The response of white students as well as that of Black students was impressive. There was dynamism between the Black community and the GTU.

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[23]Robert C. Kimball, *The Center for Urban-Black Studies' Abolition Story*," 13.

The Center's position was strengthened by the fact that Black seminarians pressured their seminaries to be supportive. The Third World Caucus at PSR included financial support for the Center in its list of demands presented to the PSR Board of Trustees. Later, white students would petition for the acceptance of the Black Theological Year. The Black Theological Year entailed having visiting Black professors teach in each of the disciplines of theological studies.

The dedicated staff consisted of Reverends W. Hazaiah Williams, H. Eugene Farlough, Héctor E. López and Ms. Lolita R. Rivas. Their presence at the GTU made a big difference. I devoted a great deal of my energies to helping this new institution go forward. There was no need to transfer to another seminary.

I was ordained in May, 1971 and graduated from PSR in June of the same year, receiving both the Master of Divinity Degree and the Master of Arts Degree in Urban-Black Studies. Problems had to be surmounted to obtain the M.A. in Urban Black Studies. PSR had devised a plan whereby a student could receive the M.A. degree along with the M.Div. if they fulfilled three requirements: (1) achieved a 3.0 average; (2) had 20 units of credit in a particular discipline; and, (3) wrote a thesis. I had the average and 20 units in urban-black studies. The dean denied my petition for the degree. He rescinded his decision only after I had convinced him that I would appear at the next faculty meeting (I was told by him that a student could not attend faculty meetings) to have his ruling overturned. After spending six months as Assistant to the President of the Center For Urban-Black Studies, I left in January, 1972 to become the first full-time Black male professor at The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Although George Wallace was no longer standing in the school house door vowing "segregation today, tomorrow and forever," the effects still lingered. Concomitantly, it was an extraordinary place to be. The veil of segregation had been pierced by common people

who became extraordinary in their refusal to continue to accept degradation. Their legacy was there too, beckoning to me and their progeny to continue the struggle through the audacity and newer strength of the young.

These people had faced police dogs, fire hydrants, water hoses, clubs, bombs, jail and death. They had transfigured stigmas of punishments and social control such as expulsion from school and imprisonment into symbols of commitment to a New Age. Jail was no longer a badge of shame, a deterrent for many. It was a goal. Many risked their positions and lives not for themselves only, but also for those to come, the future generations. By their stripes many were healed. There is indeed a balm to make whole those bruised and wounded in the march to set captives free. Some refuse to be ever broken again. When human beings devote themselves to the struggle for liberation, they tap into the power and resources of God, creation itself. This is the message I tried to communicate to my students.

I enjoyed teaching at The University of Alabama. The privilege of participating in the development of young minds was a sacred trust that had been bestowed upon me. It was not to be taken lightly or abused. These young people were precious. The yearning of W.E.B. Du Bois was compelling:

> *...Surely there shall yet dawn some mighty morning to lift the Veil and set the prisoned free. Not for me, — I shall die in my bonds — but for fresh young souls who have not known the night and waken to the morning; a morning when men ask of the workman, not "Is he white?" but "Can he work?" When men ask artists, not "Are they black?" but "Do they know?"*[24]

Students needed at least two companions in order to embrace the day described by DuBois. The first was incorporating into their daily living a rejection of society's definition of their worth. That definition needed to come from within as they struggled with their

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[24]W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Fawcett Press, 1961), 150.

purpose for being created as the future of their communities. The second was the ability to think for themselves. It was essential to look beyond appearances, understand motivation, and assess various angles. One of the greatest compliments I received came from one of my colleagues who taught in the American Civilization Department. She stated that the most comprehensive and profound analysis of the television series, Roots, came from students who were studying with me. My teaching load consisted primarily of three courses: (1) The Black Religious Experience in America; (2) Black Religion and Social Institutions; and, (3) Luminous Darkness (Religious insights from the experience of slavery).

As a teacher I was not concerned as much with dates and other "facts" as I was with leading students to understand the circumstances and ideas that produced the "facts." I also attempted to instill in them respect for the journey, not just the destination. In order to be a fully alive person they must sometimes explore detours and derailments.

Africentrism made invaluable contributions to building a sense of their immeasurable worth. I recall their excitement and pride upon reading Chancellor Williams' *The Destruction of Black Civilization.* Their appreciation of Chinua Achebe's depiction of the alliance between missionaries and governmental exploitation in his book, *Things Fall Apart*, was gratifying to me.

I also tried to model the fact that religion had to be connected to life by my involvement in the life of the Tuscaloosa community. I learned too, from my students and the larger community. One lesson I learned was respect for the spiritual sojourns of Black people. I was twenty-five years old when I went to Tuscaloosa and very much influenced by Black theology. I visited local churches and heard old songs that appeared to be antithetical to Black theology; yet, it was clear that they were and had been critical to the survival of the people who sang them. I learned to listen more to the souls of the people than some of their words.

Another dramatic incident displaying the role of religion in perpetrating and perpetu ating racism occurred. I often took my classes to revivals at local churches in order to add an experiential component to academic study of Black religion. The churches had always been Black. I was alerted that a local white church, [redacted] Baptist Church, was holding a revival and had advertised that the public was invited. My introductory class agreed to attend the services. That Sunday morning we arrived a few minutes late. The congregation was singing the Doxology. As we prepared to ascend the steps, we were told they didn't allow "niggers" in their church and that there was a "nigger" church around the corner. They called the police. I called the press. I still remember them leaving the church with their Bibles tucked under their arms. We were accused of being just like those people who forced them (the city, state, nation?) to integrate. We were told that if we had had the love of Christ in our hearts we wouldn't have been there disturbing them. The pastor refused to come out to talk with us. Later, a meeting with the pastor and me was arranged. I invited him to my class to explain the actions of the church. He stated that he really wanted an integrated church; but, was afraid. He had started out in life as a janitor and was now pastor of this prestigious church. He couldn't risk losing some of its members. I pointed out that he might gain members as a result of witnessing to the oneness of humankind. Fearing more publicity and a demonstration at the church the following Sunday morning, the congregation agreed late Saturday night to become a New Testament Church, open to all — "if one or two (Black) people wanted to come."

During the Fall Quarter of 1976, I decided to return to school to attain the Doctor of Philosophy degree. The following Spring, I received a Danforth Fellowship and prepared to return to the San Francisco Bay Area to study at the GTU. I was not prepared for the response of my students. I explained to them that I would be of greater service to the Black community with a doctorate. Several indicated that I was needed at the University of

Alabama more than anywhere else. I was implored not to abandon them. One student said she could not believe that I would leave and vowed to call me everyday until there was no answer. She actually did this.

I returned to the GTU during the reign of Dr. [redacted] as president, dean, and head of my area, Area II, Church History. This totalitarian ruler had no respect for the Black Church, Black community, or Black students. In 1978, the accreditation team of the American Association of Theological Schools (AATS) inquired about the dearth of Black students at the GTU. He informed them that the Black Church was no longer a priority for Black students. This refusal to admit that the GTU had not actively recruited Black students or provided a nurturing environment for them was indicative of the putrid attitude that permeated the redressing of issues of Black inclusion and empowerment.

Again, I became very involved in the Center For Urban-Black Studies. I assisted in teaching the courses and in the design and implementation of other programs. Consequently, I was also aware of the president-dean's efforts to dismantled it and his unmitigated use of power to enforce racism.

When I submitted a proposal to study the communication in Black worship as a research tool, which according to GTU guidelines could serve as a language option, all procedures were violated in denying the proposal. A committee was set up to discuss the proposal. Dr. [redacted] promised me that I would be invited to appear before the committee. I inquired several times about the meeting date of the committee. Finally, I was told that the proposal had been rejected. He justified the rejection by claiming that a certain Black professor at the University of California did not believe in Black English. The words "Black English" had not been mentioned in my proposal. He never reviewed the proposal with me prior to delivering it to the Doctoral council. I was not informed about the date it would

be discussed by the council. By chance I was in the building and another student informed me that my proposal was on the agenda in the meeting of the doctoral council.

Realizing that Dean [redacted] and I could not reconcile our differences and needing full-time employment, I left in the Spring of 1980 to become Co-Director of United Campus Ministry at The University of Ohio in Athens, Ohio. It reminded me of Liberty. Both towns had some brick streets and an overwhelmingly white population. There were only about fifty Black residents in the town, excluding those attached to the University. Located in the foothills of Appalachia, Athens had a strong conservative tradition that was persistently challenged by a progressive cadre of people committed to a more loving order. In addition, the University had a high percentage of international students. The other two co-directors were white women, Reverend Jan Griesinger and Ms. Carol Kuhre. Together with other staff and a very supportive board of directors, we unashamedly proclaimed support for the disinherited and discarded. There were times when the reality of common ground was indisputable.

My ministry to/with international students was probably more definitive than that to/with the Black community. During the Fall Semester, 1986, however, this changed dramatically. Randall Routt was hired as one of our peer ministers. Randy had impressed me with his attendance at various university forums and his understanding for the need of a viable Black Students Union. When a small grant proposal that I had written was funded, Randall Routt was hired as one of the persons I wanted to give leadership to organizing the Black Student Union as an expression of UCM's ministry. It worked! This young man possessed excellent organizing skills, initiative, commitment, and charisma. He was an impressive leader and his effectiveness resulted in his election as President of the Student Senate during the Spring Semester. The Black Student Union became an organization with which the University had to reckon. Through him, my ministry had been given vitality.

It was also during this time that Dr. W. Hazaiah Williams asked me to return to Berkeley as Director of the Center For Urban-Black Studies. Initially, I was hesitant. I questioned whether my radical past at the GTU would hinder efforts to invigorate the Center. I was informed that most of the presidents were new, hopefully signaling that we could begin anew.

CHAPTER 2

CONTEXT OF MINISTRY

A dream —

Still beckoning to me!

O, let America be America again —
The land that never has been yet —
And yet must be —
The land where every man is free.

O, yes; I say it plain,
America never was America to me,
And yet I swear this oath —
America will be!
An ever-living seed,
Its dream
Lies deep in the heart of me.[25]

The context of ministry is engulfed by scenarios of real human beings whose lives are manipulated and desecrated daily through greed and racism. A few headlines hint at the reality: "'Insurers' Discriminate Against Poor, Says Consumer Coalition;" "Racism, Sexism in Job Programs;" "Black-White Life Expectancy Gap Grows;" "Reports Says Blacks Being Tracked Away from College;" "Grim Numbers for Black Infants: Mortality Rate Triple that

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[25]Langston Hughes, "Let America Be America Again," in Langston Hughes and Arna Bontemps, ed., *The Poetry of the Negro: 1746-1949* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1949), 106.

of Non-Blacks;" "Death Row Runs Along Racial Lines;" "Top CEO's Rewarded with Multi-Million Dollar Contracts while Laying Off Workers;" "Earnings Gap Divides Educated Whites, Blacks;" "Study: Colleges Are Still Racially Out of Balance;" "Black Middle Class Missing Out on Top Jobs;" "Study: Fewer Americans Belong to Middle Class;" "Minority Single Mothers Spend More on Housing;" "Poverty in U.S. Worse than in 7 Western Nations;" "Blacks Are Prime Target in the Majority of Hate Crimes;" and, "Growth, but Not Power, for State's Minorities."

One out of four Black males between ages 20 and 29 is either incarcerated, on parole or on probation. The United States incarcerates Black males at a rate four times that of South Africa under the system of apartheid. Although 80% of illegal drug users are white, Blacks constitute 44% of drug possession arrests.

According to a report by the Northern California Common Agenda Coalition and the American Friends Service Committee (Appendix 1), the average household spends $3,089 in federal income taxes. The taxes are distributed in the following ways:

$1,550.68	on the Military
$274.92	on Health Care
$86.49	on Education
$48.50	on Housing
$19.77	on Environmental Protection
$12.97	on Job Training

The people of the Golden State have serious problems (Appendix 2): Fifty-eight percent of renters pay over thirty percent of their income for rent. The high school dropout rate is 32 percent. Twenty percent of residents cannot afford health insurance. Youth unemployment statewide is sixteen percent.

The federal government has responded to the problems over a ten-year period with the following cuts in financial support (Appendix 2):

Housing	$1.3 billion
Education	$1.3 billion
Health care	$2.0 billion
Job Training	$4.7 billion
Revenue Sharing	$2.0 billion

Whites form 53% of the population of Alameda County. Blacks constitute 17% (Appendix 3). A recently released U.S. Census Bureau report stated that there were 68,787 people living in poverty in Oakland (Alameda County's largest city) with 40% of them living below 50% of the poverty line (Appendix 4). There were 15,700 Black households with incomes of less than $10,000 compared to 7,300 white households. Oakland had a 9.5 unemployment rate compared to 5.2 in the nine counties Bay Area. Indications are that the social and economic gap is getting worse in some cases, creating a two-tiered society "that is filled with rage." These are some of the realities that characterize the socio-geographical context.

The specific context of ministry is the Center For Urban-Black Studies, affiliated with the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. Berkeley is located in Alameda County adjacent to Oakland. The GTU was formed in 1962 as a result of three years of conversations between the Episcopal, Baptist, Lutheran, and Presbyterian seminaries. They shared the concern that their common goal of providing excellence in theological education could only be achieved in an ecumenical setting of shared and interdependent theological resources. The GTU is comprised of the following seminaries:

- American Baptist Seminary of the West
- The Church Divinity School of the Pacific (Episcopal)
- Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology
- Franciscan School of Theology
- The Jesuit School of Theology
- Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary

- Pacific School of Religion (Interdenominational)
- San Francisco Theological Seminary (Presbyterian)
- Starr King School for the Ministry

The GTU describes itself in the following manner:

> *"The GTU is an extraordinary environment for theological education widely recognized as the most successful theological consortium in the country. Through the combined resources of nine seminaries representing a broad range of Roman Catholic orders and Protestant denominations and faculty resources in Jewish, Buddhist, and Orthodox studies, over 500 courses are offered each year. Students have access to the expertise of 128 full-time faculty members, numerous adjunct faculty, and visiting scholars."*[26]

This inclusiveness excluded Blacks as personnel in any decision-making positions. Although there were ten schools, (including the GTU itself) there were no Black presidents, vice-presidents, or deans. There were no Black directors of admission, recruitment, field work, or student affairs. Mrs. [redacted] a Black woman, became registrar at Pacific School of Religion and was later sacrificed on the altar of racism after many years of faithful and competent service.

The Black Religious Experience was excluded as a critical and integral part of theological study and ministry formation. The lives, insights, and ministries of some of the nation's most articulate, valiant, and dedicated freedom fighters were thereby deemed irrelevant to the struggles involved in the Reign of God during the latter part of the twentieth century and the commencement of the twenty-first century.

The recognition of this void gave birth to the Center For Urban-Black Studies. The Center's brochure defines its ministry in the following ways:

> *The Center For Urban-Black Studies, founded in 1969, is a nationally acclaimed center for theological education. Noted for its creative educational design, the Center incorporates Urban-Black and Urban-Minority communities into the life and work of theological education. The Center provides a focal point for understanding, training, and support in response*

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[26]Graduate Theological Union Catalog, 1993-1995 (Berkeley), 13.

to the needs of the Black Church and Black community for trained leadership. The isolated self images of the white Church are corrected through exposure to the contributions of the Black Church.

The Center's programming conscientiously redresses the racial inequities inherent in American society and consciously strives to be a continuing resource in the struggle of the Black world to increase the measure of justice, righteousness, and compassion.

The Center linked the GTU and the larger Black community. It was beneficial to both communities. The GTU's physical and academic resources became more accessible and user friendly to the Black community. The GTU community was exposed to the creative ways Black people have dealt with the reality of and quest for God. This included different theological foundations, methodologies, and models of ministry.

Seminarians gained from the experiences of Black clergy and laity. Disciplined study of the Black preacher and Black Church enhanced the GTU and was fundamental to understanding Black community and ministry in the urban-Black context. Without question the Black preacher has been the most vital figure in the quest for Black empowerment.

The Black Preacher

Moving across the pages of history almost unnoticed by historians, was one of the most colorful and dynamic figures ever to illuminate American folklore. Alternately revered and ridiculed, this reknownless hero prototyped a noble and gifted breed — the "Black Preacher."

...Man of God by calling... but often teacher, healer, carpenter and undertaker by necessity. It was he who took down the mutilated bodies of black men after the mobs had done their worst. It was he who represented black people to a hostile white community in times of deep trouble. He did this, not for pay, not for glory, but only to serve. He made life a little less tedious and the hard journey a little less arduous. When a child was born he was there to bless and cheer... When death came close, he was there to guide and comfort... When food and hope ran low, he was there to bring faith and assurance. He knew fear and loneliness, pain and trouble, as intimately and as often as any of his flock; but from his lips always fell words of comfort and reassurance. His bones were just as numb and his muscles just as tired

> *and sore — yet he went among his people serene and calm and cheerfully... For that was his calling — and following his calling he helped to save a people.*[27]

The Black preacher became the articulation of the ailments and aspirations of Black America. A new creation on American soil, this unique embodiment of humanity and divinity has influenced the lives of Black people and American society far beyond anything suggested by his or her background. This uniqueness resulted from his/her dedication to redressing unparalleled conditions of the parishioners in the colonies and later the United States — i.e., the effects of chattel slavery and its descendants — and the memory of Africa etched in body, mind, and spirit (the whole self).

> *This was slavery, the crucifixion of individual Africans and their descendants, the mass crucifixion of a race of people. Yet, out of this most malignant denial of life, black Americans affirmed the beauty of being, of life, and testified to the ultimate rule of the ultimate.*[28]

It was the Black preacher who guided Black Americans from the social status of non-beings to witnesses to the indestructibility of the human spirit. Intentionally, slaves from different tribes were mingled together to prevent the development of community and to thwart insurrection.

> *It was through him (the black preacher) that the people of diverse languages and customs who were brought here from diverse parts of Africa and thrown into slavery were given their first sense of unity and solidarity. He was the first shepherd of this bewildered flock.*[29]

Systems — religion, family, communication — were prohibited or severed. Improvisation became characteristic of his/her ministry.

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[27]Joseph A. Johnson, *The Soul of the Black Preacher* (Nashville: Christian Methodist Church, 1970), introduction by C. D. Coleman, VI-VII.

[28]Dorsey O. Blake, *The Black Preacher as Leader* (Masters' Thesis) (Berkeley: Pacific School of Religion, 1971), 4.

[29]James Weldon Johnson, *God's Trombones* (New York: Viking Press, 1955), 2.

> *The preacher is the most unique personality developed by the Negro on American soil. A leader, a politician, an orator, a "boss," an intriguer, an idealist, all these he is, and ever, too, the centre of a group of men, now twenty, now a thousand in number. The combination of certain adroitness with deep-seated earnestness, of tact with consummate ability, gave him his preeminence, and helps him maintain it. The type, of course, varies according to time and place, from the West Indies in the sixteenth century to New England in the nineteenth, and from the Mississippi bottoms to cities like New Orleans or New York.*[30]

Charles Hamilton made the following assessment:

> *And so it has been throughout the history of Black people in America. The black preacher has been called upon by politicians, parishioners, peacemakers and all others. He has been a natural leader in the black community. He has a fixed base, the church; he has a perpetual constituency, the congregation, which he sees assembled for at least one to two hours each week. And he is highly respected among that constituency.*[31]

The Black preacher was indeed an American creation, rising from the unique exigencies of the American reality. The Black preacher was neither a copy of the white preacher or his/her African predecessor.

> *In America then, the black preacher — the one considered most knowledgeable about their religion in America — emerged to diagnose the individual and corporate fractures of black Americans, to lead them in healing the fractures, and to direct them in responding to the causes of and those responsible for the fractures. His emergence as leader, however, was not a simplistic, inevitable extension of African heritage. He had to carve his existence out of his splintered African heritage crushed beneath the beam of white, American Christianity.*[32]

The impact of the Black preacher upon the Black community has been immeasurable. This extraordinary being has been a source of power and promise, health and hope. The vitality of the Black preacher was inextricably bound to the Black Church and Black religion. The Center illumined this relation and corrected misinformation.

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[30]W.E.B. DuBois, *Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Fawcett Publications, 1969), 141.

[31]Charles V. Hamilton, *The Black Preacher in America* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1972), 12.

[32]Op. Cit. Dorsey O. Blake, 5.

The Black Church

> *Behind any spectrum of values is a cultural history which is the continuing fabric of the social (including the religious) experiences of a given society. The Christian West has developed independently of any knowledge or concern for black people as people without serious qualifications on account of color ever since Charles Martel stopped the Moors at Tours in 732. The Protestant Ethic which provided the political and economic thrust which founded America and shaped its development was not a salient feature of African or African-American ideological experience. The prevailing values which illustrated the practice of American religion and defined the American culture are precisely the values which created for the African Diaspora a peculiar, involuntary experience which black religion attempts to view and interpret in meaningful perspective.*[33]

The Black Church is fundamentally different from the white church in the way it lives its life as well as its creation. Its congregants bear the mark's of oppression. Even though many Black churches had their origins in white churches, they are still essentially different.

> *The answer to the perpetuation in the black churches of a doctrine obviously inimical to the interests of black Christians was a black church which would find relevance and dignity for black people in this life. The black Church evolved, not as a formal black "denomination," with a structured doctrine, but as an attitude, a movement. It represents the desire of blacks to be self-conscious about the meaning of their blackness and to search for spiritual fulfillment in terms of their understanding of themselves and their experience of history. There is no single doctrine, no official dogma except the presupposition that a relevant religion begins with the people who espoused it. Black religion, then, cuts across denominational, cult, and sect lines to do for black people what other religions have not done: To assume the black man's humanity, his relevance, his responsibility, his participation, and his right to see himself as the image of God.*[34]

These ideas are expounded by Dr. Gayraud Wilmore. In his book, Black Religion and Black Radicalism, Wilmore clearly connects the march to freedom with Black religion. Black religious leaders have formed the vanguard of social protest. Black people endowed

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[33]C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Experience in Religion* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press/Douibleday, 1974), 1.

[34]Ibid., 3.

them with special leadership roles. These roles reflected the experiences, aspirations, and confidence of the people.

Traditionally, black religion has been misunderstood by white scholars because they have not given serious study to it as a phenomenon dramatically nonconformist with their concept of Church. Even the attempt of liberal white scholars to identify Black theology as an offspring of Latin American liberation theology reflects ignorance of its prior history and concern for Black people as a community and race. This legacy of empowerment and radicalism is intrinsic in the Black religious experience. Wilmore states:

> *An exceedingly elastic but tenacious thread binds together the contributive and developmental factors of black religion in the United States as one distinctive social phenomenon. It is the thread of what may be called, if properly defined, "black radicalism." Black religion has always concerned itself with the fascination of an incorrigibly religious people with the mystery of God, but it has been equally concerned with the yearning of despised and subjugated people for freedom — freedom from the religious, economic and political domination that whites have exercised over blacks since the beginning of the African slave trade. It is this radical thrust of blacks for human liberation expressed in theological terms and religious institutions that is the defining characteristic of black Christianity and black religion in the United States — from the preacher-led slave revolts to the Black Manifesto of James Forman and the Black Declaration of Independence of the National Committee of Black Churchmen.*[35]

The Black Church has had to deal with its relationship to societal problems throughout its sojourn. Because it has been a primary institution among Black people, much has been expected of it. It has not always delivered in ways satisfying to all. As a result, it has often been the focus of criticism.

> *One of the continuing paradoxes of the black church as the custodian of a great portion of black culture and religion, is that it is at once the most reactionary and the most radical of black institutions; the most imbued with the mythology and values of white America, and yet the most proud, the most independent and indigenous collectivity in the black community. In order to appreciate black religion and the black church — indeed, in order to understand black radicalism anywhere in the world — one must delve into the nature and meaning of this paradox of the religious experience of Africans — both on the African continent and in the*

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[35]Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism* (Second Edition) (Maryknow, New York: Oribis Books, 1983), IX-X.

> *Diaspora. The radicals who deprecate the black church, the black professionals who avoid it, and black television comedians who mimic it, need to know how facilely they have absorbed white ignorance and how they have sewn themselves up in that bag. Black pride and power, black nationalism and pan-Africanism have had no past without the church and black religion, and without them they may well have no enduring future.*[36]

The Black Church has not had the luxury of separating its life and function from the daily experiences of its people. It has been the place of refuge for personal strength and corporate response. Its creation is a result of slavery and continued manifestations of racism. Its concerns therefore go beyond liturgy and the worship experience itself.

> *One of the themes running through a great deal of the interpretations of Black theology and Black religion is the assertion that the Black community did not and and does not make distinctions between the secular and the sacred and that it follows from this assertion that the Black Church is and has been the locus of the Black community. If this is so, then it means that the church is the locus of the expression of black cultural life. Politics, art, business, and all other dimensions of the Black community should thus find their expression as aspects of the religious experience of Black folks. To test out this assertion Black scholars in religion should be conversant with works that deal with the wider ranges of Black experience.*[37]

Implications of this statement will be further explored in the section of this document entitled, "Methodological Considerations." Knowledge of this tradition had much to offer those searching for some way to be prophetic in contemporary society.

Problems between CUBS and GTU

The infusion of the Black religious experience into the GTU community through CUBS appeared to be consistent with the idea posited in its catalog:

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[36]Ibid., x.

[37]Charles H. Long, "Assessment and New Departures for a Study of Black Religion in the United States of America," in *African American Religious Studies*, Gayrud S. Wilmore, ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 38.

> *The GTU's location in California places it directly in the midst of all of these changes. The GTU's pluralism allows it to take the lead in exploring the theological and ethical implications of diversity. It is a model of cooperation in a diverse environment.*[38]

Instead, the words contradict the reality. From the beginning, the relationship between the GTU and the Center was problematic. Two paramount issues were never resolved. They were finances and autonomy.

Dr. Robert Kimball, president of Starr King School for The Ministry at that time, reflected upon this in an unpublished paper entitled "The Center for Urban-Black Studies' Abolition Story." He quotes from the minutes of the February 2, 1969 meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of the GTU:

> *With respect to the problem of financing the Center for Urban-Black Studies, Mr. Williams (Director of the Center) noted that the Center's presence must come to mean something to the participating schools in terms of reestablishing their budget priorities. It was his feeling that the schools should be responsible for a major portion of the budget. In response to queries concerning autonomy, Mr. Williams answered that autonomy, and the necessity for it, is not a gimmick, but something which grows out of the minority community's need to say something fresh because the community recognizes that its present plight is directly related to the form and structure of present institutions. The notion of autonomy creates the possibility for developing new styles. There is a need for the Black community to feel itself involved in expressing the right to determine what is significant in a "theological" community. The ground of accountability ought to be based within the community rather than the Board of Trustees.*[39]

Dr. Kimball correctly observed that: "Finances and freedom quickly struck up a quite close relationship with one another, and a controversial relationship between the GTU and the Center for Urban-Black Studies."[40]

Initially, the Center finances were handled by the GTU. Financial records were kept by the GTU. After a couple of years, the Center, with the knowledge and support of the

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[38]Graduate Theological Union Catalog, 18.

[39]Op. Cit., Robert Kimball, 13.

[40]Ibid., 14.

GTU, became separately incorporated. The Center became even more of an anomaly and a source of agitation for Heads of Institutions — the name of the council of chief executives of the seminaries and the GTU itself. In a sense the Center was comparable to the seminaries in its legal status and programmatic autonomy. This was precisely the problem. It was autonomous, yet a creation of the GTU. It depended on the GTU for monetary support; yet, it had its own governing board. This perceived lack of accountability to the GTU and, therefore, control by the GTU became the rallying cry for their efforts to dismantle the Center.

In the beginning, the Center did receive significant funding from the seminaries and in-kind benefits including an office from the GTU itself. The Center had put forth a funding formula. Each institution should contribute the equivalent of the salary package for a faculty member. It was felt that the Center would contribute to the enhancement of the school in a comparable manner. The contributions of a couple of schools actually approximated this figure.

This level of compensation was short-lived. As early in the relationship as October, 1971, — according to Kimball — the president of the GTU discussed allocating funds elsewhere to accomplish what he had hoped the Center would have accomplished. The next month it was stated that "the Center would be reconceived and reconstituted in such a way as to be more directly related to GTU and participating school programs."[41] During this period, the enrollments for the Center's courses were among the highest at the GTU, especially for elective courses. White students as well as Black students extolled the excellence of the courses. The crux of the matter was the question of control.

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[41]Ibid., 15.

This was the overriding concern regardless of who was president of the GTU. The change in presidents merely brought a stylistic change in deviant — or perhaps more correctly — devious behavior. During the visit of the accreditation team of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (AATS), the president explained the dearth of Black students at the GTU by stating that the Black Church was no longer a priority in the Black community. The team, however, was still disturbed by some of its observations and recommended that the GTU clarify its relationship with the Center. It also recommended the utilization of a team of persons knowledgeable about the Black Church in this effort. This effort was to take place over a period of time with reports given to the Board of Directors of the Center and the Board of Trustees of the GTU. This process was never undertaken.

The pressure from AATS did result in the Heads establishing a committee through the Consortium Council (a governing body with representatives from all levels of the GTU community) to review the relationship between the GTU and all the centers including CUBS. The committee reported that there appeared to be an unresolved problem of institutional racism that went beyond the scope of the committee.

Each year, funds for the Center dwindled. In 1981, Black students organized and requested funding. Their request was viewed by the Heads as being competitive with CUBS and was denied.

In 1982, the GTU contracted a Black consultant to spend three days doing what AATS had recommended should take place over a period of time and should be undertaken by a team of persons. He stated in his report that the GTU had "reaped where it had not sown" and was quite laudatory about the contributions of the Center under extremely difficulty circumstances. His report had not met their needs. A committee wyas established to examine GTU's responsibility to deal more broadly with ethnic and interracial concerns.

This resulted in the establishment of Interracial Crosscultural Education (IRCCE) with annual funding of approximately $70,000. IRCCE never received the support of the Black community. One local and nationally prominent pastor refused an invitation to serve on IRCCE's advisory committee by stating that this was just an attempt to stab the director of the Center in the back. IRCCE never achieved the prominence or acceptance that the Center had claimed. It closed its doors after about four years.

By the time I arrived as director in 1987, only Starr King School for the Ministry continued to make financial contributions to the Center. Dr. Williams had assumed the role of board chair and fund raiser for the Center.

One of my first responsibilities was to develop an affiliates agreement. This had to be approved by the Council of Presidents. Yet, I was not allowed to meet with them. I had to submit the document to the GTU president who would then present it to the other presidents. They would tell him what they did not like and send it back to me. I would make changes and send it back to them. Therefore, all of the presidents knew that CUBS had a new director; yet, only Dr. Gordon McKeeman, president of Starr King School for the Ministry, made any effort to meet me. I set up an appointment with each of the other presidents. Only Dr. McKeeman knew what the acronym IRCCE stood for and the content of its program. One of the presidents told me that he didn't know really what they did and would have voted to cut off funding. However, the accrediting team was coming the following year he stated and "you don't want to cut off the only minority thing you've got going." His terminology was informing. It was the only thing they had going. It was under the control of the dean's office. The issue of autonomy for IRCCE did not exist. It did not have any.

The presidents later complimented me for the direction the Center was taking, the quality of its programming, and its visibility. Requests came to use the Center's brochure in recruitment efforts; yet, no financial support was given.

The relationship was one sided. CUBS greatly enhanced the GTU; but, there was no reciprocity.

Failures of the GTU

The GTU has achieved significant progress in the area of ecumenism. Its record, however, in dealing with racism is dismal. The April 1988 ATS/WASC Accrediting Report on the GTU records the following:

> *Briefly the team feels that the GTU has not made positive efforts in recruiting minority students. This, of course, is of crucial importance if the GTU is to play its vital role in preparing the leaders and scholars for the demographically changing church populations in the Western U.S. and beyond. So, the GTU must move ahead rapidly to further develop and publish for all to see its stated intentions for its graduate programs, and it must initiate active recruitment efforts for racial ethnic students.*[42]

This condition existed five years after Dr. Lawrence Jones stated of the anemic efforts of the GTU to deal with Black Studies.

> *Moreover, recognition of the pluralistic character of the GTU itself makes it imperative that appropriate attentions be directed towards the distinctive heritages of these ethnic minorities including their religious histories, their culture, their current social and political circumstances in America, as well as their current appropriation and institutionalization of the Christian or Unitarian faiths. Intentional efforts in this area are required to countervail, to some degree, the overwhelming white, Anglo-Saxon biases of the GTU curriculum, staff, faculty, student body, library, and extra-curriculum. That the accountability of individual schools to their denominational constituencies does not relieve them as educational institutions from their obligation to educate students for vocations in pluralistic settings. Theological schools may derive their support from various ecclesiastical bodies and may have "apostolates" to particular ethnic groups, but the fact of financial dependency and agency does not relieve them of their obligation to help their supporting groups critically to examine and realign, where indicated, customary and unexamined priorities and expressions of mission concern.*

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[42]ATS/WASC Accrediting Report, April, 1988.

The several reports dealing with these matters have provided a rather broad consensus concern„ing the changes necessary to make the GTU fully responsive to the needs of Blacks in its midst. A careful perusal of the available documentation will make this unequivocally clear. What has been lacking has been a will to conceive of these matters as of sufficient urgency for clear-cut decisions and commitments to be made. This is, in part, due to the non-specific character of the GTU structure and the defused decision-making process — though, in fact, the ultimate is not so much a "Union" as an association which permits the autonomous actions of individual institutions, in the present instance, to vitiate what ought to be a GTU priority, commonly shared and prosecuted.[43]

The GTU structure was a convenient scapegoat for not dealing honestly with the issues of racism in theological education. Five years after the 1988 ATS/WASC report, two Black students concluded in a research document entitled "The Need for a Multiracial Curriculum and Ministries:"

Although classes offered through the GTU are plentiful and diverse, there is a lack of adequate representation of classes particularized to black experiences. For instance, there are only six courses specifically addressing the black experience offered from the 1992-93 school year, a mere 1.1% of the total classes offered. If the total black student population is 5.3%, then it would stand to reason that, if we are using statistics as an equitable tool of measurement, there should be 29 classes that are particularized to the black experience.

Of the classes offered, there was only one daytime class in the fall semester and none in the spring. Most of them were offered through the American Baptist Seminary of the West; the Pacific School of Religion offered two, and Starr King School for the Ministry offered one. None of these classes was a core class nor a requirement for graduation. Since most black students are economically pressured and there is a high percentage who are commuter students, taking elective courses is indeed a luxury. Despite this fact, however, the classes were well attended by a diverse ethnic mix.[44]

They continue:

To be taught the theology of Barth and Tillich is good, but a homeless black person is not interested in ultimate reality. They do not need to be told about where we believe evil comes

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[43]Lawrence N. Jones, *Recommendations Concerning Black Studies in the Graduate Theological Union*, Berkeley, California, 21.

[44]L.P. Lewis and Robin Walker, *The Need for a Multiracial Curriculum and Ministries* Spring, 1993, 1-2.

from, these people know all too well about the world's evils. They deal with them daily. We have to learn to be able to see these evils from their context and not that of "holy hill."[45]

A student in an independent research course declared that he would recommend his seminary only to the most "domesticated of Negroes."

Two students from a third seminary stated that the ideology of their particular school indicated that its Eurocentric viewpoint was normative and without bias. Respondents to their survey indicated the following:

The culture of the institution is strictly Euro-American. Racism will be perpetuated as long as the racial imbalance is maintained. But changing the people won't be enough. There is also the problem of "who speaks for whom?" Things will work if People of Color can really represent their groups, their voices are heard and can impact policy. Then there will be a sense of health.[46]

They conclude their report with these recommendations:

1. Include People of Color (American born) who are more progressive and clear in their assessment of racism and its manifestations on committees.
2. For PSR to have a mandatory course for first semester students on the subject of Social Justice, Power, and Oppression (taught by an American born minority).

The goals of the course can be opening students to:

a. The influence of institutionalized oppression on one's values and attitudes.

b. The corrupting and deluding influences of power on personal integrity and behavior.

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[45]Ibid., 3.

[46]Emma Williams and Lennie Kwock, "Systemic Perspectives on Racism at the Pacific School of Religion: The Where's and How's of Racism in an Institution."

3. Mandatory classes totaling six to nine units to deal with multicultural issues and minority theologians in the field of Liberation theology and womanist Theology, etc. (taught by American born minorities).

4. The inclusion of all people needs to be reframed from a liability and potential diminishing of one's domain to an enrichment of the spiritual and social lives of each participant in the system. The sharing of culture and personal stories can create an environment for dialectical sharpening and discovery of one's own values and cultural styles. But this has already been the "politically correct" way of viewing "multiculturalism." So what else is needed?

It is our recommendation that the emphasis of religious training at PSR shift from "the discovery of religious experience promoted among all people." "Education" implies something that is to be passed on. The wisdom of the acceptable saints is passed to the acceptable students, who then pass it to the congregations. "Discovery" means to find through exploration. "Discovery" means learning from the revelations borne out of struggle. "Discovery" expands one's horizons and enables one to have a deeper experience with self, others and God. PSR can provide the arena for this struggle. But a successful arena must be able to maintain a creative tension of differing values, world views and ways of doing things. This requires dialogue with not just the right readings, but also with individuals who embody these differing values and world view. In the systemic mode of thinking, having perspectives of people from many differing vantage points in our global system will serve to enrich all. This environment will not be comfortable. But then growth and religious experience requires pushing beyond the boundaries of one's experiences. Skilled facilitation is essential. In this kind of seminary training, PSR can be preparing students who are equipped to empower congregations with tools, with the means of living in the creative tension of life to "discover" God in their own intimate ways. Heaven knows our world is becoming more tension-filled than ever, so, the question is: What kind of education does PSR choose to offer?[47]

Dr. Vincent L. Wimbush offers these challenges to Eurocentric theological hermeneutics embodied in theological education:

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[47]Ibid., 33-34.

1. It is too exclusive. It lacks appreciation for the development of hermeneutical approaches in non-Western cultures and minority cultures within the Western culture.
2. It is preoccupied with the notion that a text has only one legitimate meaning, which usually means the only orthodox meaning.
3. It reads the text solely as a pr,oduct of history, thus, in the search for original meaning it effectively locks the text in the past.
4. It overemphasizes text production and text mediation to the exclusion of text reception in the interpretative process. With this kind of emphasis questions of origin, sources, transmission, and preservation dominate.
5. It is too letter-conscious and not narrative-conscious enough. Therefore, it overemphasizes the propositional statement to the exclusion of the historical-experiential event.
6. It is too heavily dependent on the historical-critical method and the historical interpretation theory as a means for appropriating meaning.
7. It places the reader in a passive state as opposed to an active state.
8. It tends to cater to a literate bourgeois class while condescending to, debasing, and/or excluding the oral traditions and methods of interpretation tradition-ally resident in minority cultures.

The GTU is an extraordinary context for racially sensitive ministry; yet, it has consistently refused to explore its potential in a consecrated fashion. Eurocentrism is thoroughly entrenched.

CHAPTER 3

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS: LANDSCAPE OF AFRICENTRISM

We live in a time of cultural disarray and social decay, age filled with ruins and fragments.[49]

Moral integrity is built into creation. God desires justice and right relationships among the peoples of the earth. Such relationships are prerequisites for loving God and unifying humankind. They often appear anemic, however, when compared with the pervasiveness of injustice and dissonance. Rather than an indictment of God's intention, this condition is symptomatic of humankind's challenge of God's sovereignty. It results from self-aggrandizement instead of glorification of God, egocentrism instead of theocentrism.

There is a sense of impenetrability that enshrouds the cultural disarray and social decay. It reflects the wedding of the powerful and powerless, of greed and acquiescence to greed.

The annals of human history also reveal that God acts in life — confronting traditions, cultural realities, social systems, and personal behavior — in behalf of justice and empowers those who make the suffering of others their own. Self preservation is not the guiding force of human concern. The light reflected through the ages by those who have lost themselves — their egos and often their lives — for the sake of others declares something quite different.

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[49]Cornel West, *Prophetic Fragments* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1988), 270.

They have conjoined the temporal and the eternal. Their lives have registered as saviors of humankind, saviors of God.

Thou?
Thee?
I lynched Thee?

Awake me, God! I sleep!
What was that awful word Thou saidst?
That black and riven thing — was it Thee?
That gasp — was it Thine?
This pain — is it Thine?
Are, then, these bullets piercing Thee?
Have all the wars of all the world,
Down all dim time, drawn blood from Thee
Have all the lies and thefts and hates —
Is this Thy Crucifixion, God,
And not that funny, little cross,
With vinegar and thorns?
Is this Thy kingdom here, not here,
This stone and stucco drift of dreams?

Help!
I sense that low and awful cry —
Who cries?
Who weeps?
With silent sob that rends and tears —
Can God sob?

Who prays?
I hear strong prayers throng by,
Like mighty winds on dusky moors —
Can God pray?

Prayest Thou, Lord, and to me?
Thou needest me?

Thou needest me?
Thou needed me?
Poor, wounded soul!
Of this I never dreamed. I thought —

Courage, God
I come![50]

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[50]W.E.B. DuBois, "The Prayers of God," in *Darkwater* (New York: Schaken Books, 1969), 251-252.

Children of God are crucified still. And even today God continues to call daughters and sons of God of deliver (save) the people, to choose resurrection over death, light over darkness. God has clearly proclaimed this direction and quest. A covenant has been made to redeem God's creation and creatures. Surely this belief ought to undergird theological education.

The Model for Ministry that will be presented is an attempt to respond faithfully to this claim. The model places an emphasis on empowerment as a means to establish in theological education justice and right relationships — forerunners to reconciliation and unity.

These theological underpinnings are foundational to the author's ministry. They are derived from at least four sources: (1) African religious heritage; (2) Hebrew scriptures; (3) Jesus and his religion; (4) the African American religious experience.

African Religious Heritage

> *How manifold are your works though hidden from sight, O'Sole God besides whom there is none. You created earth according to your desire, you alone. All people, cattle and all kinds of animals, all on earth that walk on legs and all on high that fly with wings. You set every person in place and satisfy their needs. All have good and their time of life is determined. Their tongues differ in speech and so do their characters. The colors of their skins are different also. For you distinguished the people. How excellent are your ways O'Lord of eternity...*[51]

God intentionally created diversity within the unity of creation. The fact of different races is a cause for affirmation and celebration. It is not a reason for developing spurious theories of racial superiority and inferiority. Creation is the work of God alone who provides for the needs of creation.

Speech or the Word is also identified as critical to creation. It is stated:

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[51]Karenga, Maulana, *The Husia* (Los Angeles: Kawaida Publications, 1984), 22.

> *Many were the beings that come forth the commands of my mouth. Heaven had not yet come into being. Nor had earth come into being... I created forms of every kind. Many were the forms which issued forth from the commands of my mouth. Not yet had I established Shu, the power and principle of light and air. Nor sent forth Tefnut, the power and principle of moisture. There existed no one who acted together with me. I conceived it in my own heart...*[52]

The imagery is so arresting. The insights are strikingly similar to those in the Gospel of John. Is it possible that John borrowed from this Egyptian understanding of creation?

> *In the Beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.* (John 1:1-5)

The God, Ra, subsequently declares:

> *I came forth from among the plants which I created and I created all things which creep and crawl and all that exists among them. Then by the power and principles of light and air and the power and principle of moisture, heaven and earth were brought into being, and by earth and heaven Osiris, Horus, Seth, Isis and Nephthys were brought into being from the womb, one after another, and they gave birth to the multitudes in this land.*[53]

There is a relationship between power, principle, and creation. Intelligence undergirds creation. Creation embodies relatedness and is evolutionary.

A common belief enshrined in ancient African religious systems — whether Hermopolitan, Heliopolitan, Memphite, or Theban — is the understanding that the universe was created out of "uncreated" matter which was described as chaotic matter equated with non-being. This is different from the concept that the world was created out of the abyss, a void, out of nothing. God was autogenous and the substance of the universe emanated from the organization of this non-being material. The future is dependent upon how the uncreated matter gets created, how non-being is transformed, how chaotic matter becomes organized.

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[52]Ibid., 5.

[53]Ibid., 5.

The applications are profound. Much of ministry deals with lives that are chaotic and individuals who appear to be non-beings, needing transformation of personality and relationship with the creator and creation.

God is also a very personal God who acts in human society to champion those in need.

> *You, O Amen Ra, are Lord of those who have no voice. You come at the call of the humble and needy. When I cry out to you in my distress, you come quickly to my rescue, you come to give strength to one who is weak and to save me from my enslavement.*[54]

In addition to being a defender, protector, and advocate for the humble and needy, this benevolent and merciful God is a father and mother to the orphan, a husband to the widow. Ra as shepherd is a prominent theme. Maat is the foundation of both the natural and social order. In human society it is symbolized by truth, justice, and righteousness. Leaders in particular are challenged to embody Maat.

> *Helmsman do not let your ship go astray. Life-giver do not let the people die. Provider, do not let the people perish from need. Shade, do not let people become dry in the sun. Protector, do not let the crocodiles seize the people and drag them away.*[55]

The admonition and the theme of Maat in terms of a person's moral and spiritual obligation to community are further developed as instructions. These instructions bear resemblance to the proverbs of the Old Testament. It is apparent that the latter was influenced by the former.

John S. Mbiti's book, *African Religions and Philosophy*, brings enlightenment about traditional African concepts and practices prior to colonialism. His work helps to establish some foundations which directed African life. Dr. Mbiti uses the term "religions" because each people has its own religion. Yet, there are many common beliefs and practices.

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[54]Ibid., 16.

[55]Ibid., 33.

One such belief is the presumption that religion undergirds all of life. It is not merely an element of life. It is that system around which life is organized. It is not systematic theology or mandatory dogmas. Rather it is the assimilation of concepts and beliefs that had been passed down and applied to the nuances of each historical situation.

The belief that religion permeates all of life is important. For the African the market place is suffused with religion. There is no formal distinction between the material and the spiritual, the sacred and the secular, the religious and the non-religious. It is common, therefore, to implore the agents of religion whenever a fracture is introduced into an individual life or the life of the community. Indeed, one's individual way of living has little consequence. To be alive is to be part of a community and to participate in the life. The community's way of living is utmost, its health and peace. The individual finds health and peace through the health and peace of the community.

There is an unshakable faith that the Supreme God and its agents will wholeness for the community and the ones who comprise community.

Hebrew Scriptures

The story of man's struggle on the planet, haunting him as he builds his cultures, his civilizations, as he erects his altars and makes his sacrifices before his God, is to find his way back to the Garden of Eden, which must yet be achieved. To achieve community in the midst of all the things he brought upon himself by his own deeds, things that work most against community, is to sweep past the angel with the flaming sword and build a new home in the Garden of Eden. At man's moments of greatest despair he is instinctively unwilling and perhaps unable to accept the contradictions of his life as final or ultimate. Something deep within reminds him that the intent of the Creator of life and the living substance is that men must live in harmony within themselves and with one another and perhaps with all of life. When he seeks to achieve it, even in his little world of belonging and meaning, what is at first the

dim racial memory stirring deep within him becomes the paean of great transcendent chorus rejoicing him on his way.[56]

This passage from Dr. Howard Thurman's *The Search for Common Ground* speaks profoundly to the focus of the model. It clarifies that the racism that has disinherited much of Black America is not the will of the Creator neither will it ultimately triumph. It results from the institutionalization and incorporation of the choice of death instead of life, disorder rather than harmony, into social systems. When people choose life, they are empowered and sustained by life itself. Ideas presented in the model of ministry are options and strategies for resurrecting life, hope, confidence, and trust. The affirmation that people are children of God means to live in the Garden of Eden with hope having the necessary strength to face the vicissitudes of life.

The Hebrew scriptures begin with a narrative of creation. God creates out of a void: "In the beginning God created the heavens and earth. The earth was without form and void" (Genesis 1:1-2). God "calls" the world into being. It is through speech, the word, that nothing becomes something.and God said, "Let there be light; and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). All of creation is interrelated. There is unity. God is Sovereign, yet humankind has been given free will. It is through the exercise of this free will that humankind comes into conflict with God. Humankind replaces dominion over creation with a struggle for domination. The unity is severed because of power politics. Who is really in control: God, man, woman, the serpent?

When God calls out to humanity, to Adam and Eve, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9), it is not a logistical question. God is not confused about their physical or geographical location. It is a question of faithfulness that is being raised. Where are you in relationship to your

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[56]Howard Thurman, *The Search for Commoon Ground* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 27-28.

responsibility to creation, self, each other, and God. It is this question that forms the essence of the Hebrew saga. It is addressed to individual persons and to the Hebrew people.

One of the most critical events in the Hebrew scriptures is the Exodus. Slavery is not what God wills for the people of God. God responds to the oppression of the Hebrews and chooses a Hebrew/Egyptian prince to deliver them:

> *Then the Lord said, "I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and heard their cry because of their taskmasters, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivities, and the Jebusites. And now, behold, the cry as the people of Israel has come to me, and I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring forth my people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt." But, Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" He said, "But I will be with you..."* (Exodus 3:7-12).

This theme of deliverance from slavery has a place of prominence in the African American sojourn. Clearly, the slaves felt it spoke to their bondage in America. *Go Down, Moses* is one of the most powerful and most frequently sung of the Spirituals. The Exodus is the reference to which Black theologians stake their claim that God is the God of the oppressed, i.e., God supports and sides with the oppressed.

What should not be forgotten is that God chose as deliverer a person who grew up in the ruler's (oppressor's) palace. This man was a murderer and fugitive from justice. Olin Moyd states the following:

> *Redemption is the root and core motif in Black theology. Redemption has the double meaning of liberation and confederation. In Black theology, liberation means deliverance from human-caused states and circumstances of oppression as well as salvation from sin and guilt. Confederation in this study means the formation of a group of people who live in a covenant relationship with one another and their Redeemer.*[57]

In specific reference to Black Americans he offers this understanding:

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[57]Olin P. Moyd, *Redemption in Black Theology* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1979), 7.

> *Redemption was not understood to be limited to liberation from oppression; it also meant the divine process of being formed into a community where love and justice would prevail. Although the physical and social realization of that redemptive hope on the part of Blacks has been intentionally and systematically obstructed and deferred by white oppressors and their heirs in this land, redemption is the core motif in black folks expressions.*[58]

The need for confederation or community is as critical as that of liberation. This theme is repeated in the Hebrew scriptures as well as in the annals of African American history. It is the question before us. How to form the redeemed community in the Bay Area. The Civil Rights Movement accomplished much in removing legal barriers of racism. Blacks have yet to possess the Promised Land.

God's promise to guide the people from Egyptian bondage to a new place, "a good land flowing with milk and honey," was not addressed to delivering or saving the private soul of any particular individual Hebrew. Likewise, when Isaiah projected one to come, the coming is connected with establishing justice.

> *The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light, those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined... Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for ever more.* (Isaiah 9: 2-7)

Through the establishment of justice, the nation will become a light unto the world. The Servant will be committed to justice. This does not mean, however, that the individual person has no obligation to strive for justice. Amos and Micah are among the prophets who clearly give justice greater significance that the worship of God when justice isn't being served. In very terse language Amos declares:

> *"I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.*
>
> *Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and cereal offerings, I will not accept them, and the peace offerings of your fatted beasts I will not look upon.*

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[58]Ibid., 16.

Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen.

But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everlasting stream." (Amos 5:21-24)

Micah declared that justice and mercy are prerequisites for walking with God. The call for the Hebrew is always a call to return to a covenantal relationship with God. It is a call from idols of whatever nature — nation, riches, self — to God. It comes to the individual(s) in their own specific sociohistorical reality. The mandate is to change that reality, to move forward into another reality, to reverse the injustice. It means surrendering oneself to the Lord of life. A positive response to God's call inevitably leads to conflict with the existing social order.

The Suffering Servant of Isaiah 42 will have the strength to carry out God's purpose in history. This special servant has been selected by God and anointed with God's spirit to succeed.

He will not fail or be discouraged until he has established justice in the earth; and the coast lands wait for his law.

Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them. (Isaiah 42:4,9)

Jesus and His Religion

Jesus' anointing by the Spirit of the Lord confirmed Isaiah's understanding that the servant would establish justice. The language that Jesus employed was that of Isaiah 61.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4: 18,19)

This passage clearly specifies social problems as issues central to Jesus' ministry. The message is not that Jesus has a priority on saving private souls. There is a cultural context in which his ministry would take place.

Howard Thurman put forth these facts about Jesus. He was a poor Jew and as such was a member of a minority group in the midst of a larger dominant and controlling group. He added the following:

> *In 63 B.C., Palestine fell into the hands of the Romans. After this date, the gruesome details of loss of status were etched, line by line, in the sensitive soul of Israel, dramatized ever by an increasing desecration of the Holy Land... It is utterly fantastic to assume that Jesus grew to manhood untouched by the surging currents of the common life that, made up the climate of Palestine. Not only must he have been aware of them, that he was affected by them is a most natural observation.*[59]

Jesus' announcement of the approaching kingdom was a declaration that a new order was approaching. He invited others to participate in the unfolding of this new reality. Joining, however, was no easy thing. There were requirements. One had to radically change. It was not a matter of improving; but, radical change. The presumption was that humankind was headed in the wrong direction and had chosen death rather than life. It was necessary to have a complete turn about. "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God." One had to say either yes or no to the new realm. Saying yes meant allegiance to a movement, a radical movement that undercut the most cherish ideals of the social order. It required radical ,obedience, a total change in living, indeed a new birth!

The Beatitudes established what the new order would look like. The contemporary order would be reversed: The meek would inherit the earth; the peacemakers would be called sons (daughters) of God; those persecuted for righteousness' sake would be blessed and given the kingdom of heaven.

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[59]Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited* (Richmond, Indiana: Friends United Press), 18-19.

Jesus saw the need for empowerment and clearly advocated it. It is this that led him into conflict with the existing order. This was inevitable. What Jesus demanded was a new way of ordering one's life, a new way of living on earth in the here and now. The eternal would be manifested in this new way.

Cedric Mayson commented on the Jesus movement in the following ways:

> *He (Jesus) was proclaiming basic economic truths about how God's jurisdiction on earth operates. This kingdom makes demands upon the production and utilization of wealth which are fundamental to the successful organization of human society. The selfish acquisition of riches, or the central control of wealth by a small section of the community is intrinsically antihuman, unworkable, and economically self-destructive.*[60]

Jesus' dedication to redeeming people from exploitative conditions is revealed:

> *The parable of the Last Judgment was one of the most powerful and dramatic stories which Jesus used. ...This parable is not addressed to individuals but to nations. It is the nations which neglect the poor and needy who are condemned... It is a most political parable, a judgment on economic realities, which requires political and economic answers to ensure that the poor and oppressed are able to share in the fullness of human life and which sets out the priorities of national intent.*[61]

> *His ministry began (Mark 1:15) and ended (Acts 1:3) with a proclamation that the kingly rule of God was at hand, on earth, amongst people a movement present and active in humankind, to the acceptance of which all nations should be disciples (Matt 4:17; Luke 17:21). The kingdom is not a political manifesto, nor an economic program, nor the prophecy of a future divine coup d'etat, but the announcement of God's sovereign will and purpose on earth which is working unseen towards the denouement. It is good news to the poor, liberty to the captives, sight to the blind, freedom for the downtrodden, and favor for the hopeless (Luke 4:18). From the beatitudes of Matthew 5:2-11 onwards, it is affirmed that God is known, revealed and obeyed in the concrete action of redemption of the poor from their condition of exploitation and dehumanization.*[62]

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[60]Cedric Mayson, *A Certain Sound* (London: Epworth Press, 1984), 19.

[61]Ibid., 49.

[62]Ibid., 50.

It is this understanding of God's action through Jesus that compels the author's commitment to a ministry of empowerment. Such commitment is an obligation of the followers of Jesus. This discernment clearly resides within the African American sojourn. It is the legacy of those extraordinary foreparents who were dragged to these shores against their wills, abused, torn from their spouses and children and considered less than human, as mere chattel. It caused them to develop a way of life that allowed them to rise above absurdity. They transformed lives that appeared to have no value into lives worth living.

Their slave spirituals reveal their knowledge of God's concern for their lives on earth. Songs such as "Walk Together Children — Don't You Get Weary," and "Steal Away to Jesus" were codes used to assist slaves to escape to freedom as well as a balm for their souls. Sometimes called otherworldly, these songs were revolutionary in that they shifted the grounds for determining one's worth. They were children of God; and, therefore, of great worth. This defied society's definition of them as property and, therefore, undercut society's control of them. Their souls were free. As long as they controlled their souls, they could not be defeated.

Because they did not consider death as the worse thing that could happen in life, they were able to risk life in behalf of freedom. The lives of the slave insurrectionists — Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner — testify to this. The abolitionist, Harriet Tubman, is another extraordinary example. Some of the most powerful figures from the pages of Black History — such as Sojourner Truth, Henry Garnet, Alexander Crummel — yoked religion and social change.

In the twentieth century, Adam Clayton Powell and Martin Luther King, Jr. were ministers who challenged the churches to be the vanguard for social transformation. Dr. King stated:

There was a time when the church was very powerful. It was during that period when the early Christians rejoiced when they were deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days, the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion. It was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society. Wherever the early Christians entered a town the power structure got disturbed and immediately sought to convict them for being disturbers of the peace and "outside agitators". But they went on with the conviction that they were "a colony of heaven," and had to obey God rather than man. They were small in number but big in commitment. They were too God intoxicated to be "astronomically intimidated." They brought an end to such ancient evils as infanticide and gladiatorial contests.

Things are different now. The contemporary church is often a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. It is often the arch supporter of the status quo. Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church's silent and often vocal sanctions of things as they are. But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If the church of today does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authentic ring, forfeit the loyalty of millions, be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century.[63]

Margaret Walker deals theologically with the Black sojourn in two great poems, "We Have Been Believers" and "For My People." She explores the relationship between belief and life.

We have been believers...

Where are our gods that they leave us asleep? Surely the priests and the preachers and the powers will hear. Surely now that our hands are empty and our hearts too full to pray they will understand. Surely the sires of the people will send us a sign.

We have been believers believing in our burdens and our demigods too long. Now the needy no longer weep and pray; the long-suffering arise, and our fists bleed against the bars with a strange insistence.[64]

She audaciously puts forth courage and hope.

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[63]Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," in *The World Treasury of Modern Religious Though* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990), 618-619.

[64]Margaret Walker, "We Have Been Believers," in Langston Hughes and Arna Bontemps, Ed., *The Poetry of the Negro 1746-1949* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1949), 180-181.

> *For my people standing staring trying to fashion a better way from confusion from hypocrisy and misunderstanding, trying to fashion a (world that will hold all the people all the faces all the adams and eves and their countless generations. Let a new earth rise. Let another world be born. Let a bloody peace be written in the sky. Let a second generation full of courage issue forth, let a people loving freedom come to growth, let a beauty full of healing and a strength of final clenching be the pulsing in our spirits and our blood. Let the martial songs be written, let the dirges disappear. Let a race of men now rise and take control. It is a call for the disinherited to become emboldened informing a brighter future and making fragments whole.*[65]

It is a call for the disinherited to become emboldened informing a brighter future and making fragments whole.

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[65]Margaret Walker, "For My People," in Arna Bontemps, Ed., *American Negro Poetry* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1963), 123-130.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

> *The Afrocentric method seeks to transform human reality by ushering in a human openness to cultural pluralism which cannot exist without the unlocking of the minds for acceptance of an expansion of consciousness.*[66]

Molefi Kete Asante's *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge* is an extremely helpful document. One of its main contributions is its definition of what Afrocentricity is and is not. Afrocentricity is not a superficial blackening of a Eurocentric curriculum. It is not even a serious study of African people employing the tools — questions, methodology, presuppositions — of Western scholarship. It has an integrity as well as a methodology of its own.

Africentricity compels investigating life from the worldview of the African. This is a revolution in scholarship. It requires developing sensitivity to the role played by Africans and the impact of history upon Africans.

It looks at the response of African peoples to external phenomena and their meaning. Questions of value are essential to the Africalogical question because knowledge is functional in the African context. Ethical issues are, consequently, integral to this organization of inquiry.

Dr. Asante distinguishes the Africentric method through the following insights:

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[66]Molefi Kete Asante's *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge* (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1990), v.

Both the phenomenologists and the Afrocentrists reject the separation of investigator/subject relationship though for different reasons. The Afrocentrists finds the wholistic impulse naturally from the cultural environment. Whether one talks of reality in the African American church or in African dance one sees that separation of subject/object, speaker/audience, dancer/spectators or investigator/subject is artificial. The social context of African people encourages a collective as opposed to an individual separation.

One might write down all one believes and thinks about a topic prior to beginning the research project. The reason for this is to ascertain what obstacles exist to an Afrocentric method in the researcher's own mind. Retrospection is the process of questioning one's self after the project has been completed to ascertain if any personal obstacles exist to a fair interpretation.

Afrocentric method suggests cultural and social immersion as opposed to "scientific distance" as the best approach to understand African phenomena. This process in itself is extremely difficult because it means that the researcher must have some familiarity with the history, language, philosophy, and myths of the people under study.[67]

A major problem of Eurocentric methods has been the distortion of the African American past. This is one of the reasons that revalorization of that reality is essential. It has been said that Black history that begins on the plantation ends up in the ghetto. Interpretations of the African American sojourn should not obfuscate the reality of Black rule in Africa and contributions of African peoples to the world. It should also not be limited to religious scholarship; but, should encompass other disciplines and areas of concern.

The African Past

One of the leading scholars in the movement to correct the distortions of scholarship was Check Anta Diop. In particular, his outstanding book, *The Africa Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality*, convincingly supports the concept of Egypt as the cradle of civilization. He convincingly argues that civilization did, indeed, begin in Africa and owes its origin to Black people. The author proceeds to carefully evaluate corroborating data from various disciplines

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[67]Ibid., 27.

including history, archeology, and anthropology. He is not interested in superficial claims; but, is committed to unveiling the truth of the past in order to responsibly chart the future.

He initiates his work in an impressive manner by using the "Father of History," Herodotus, to prove the racial composition of the ancient Egyptians, i.e., they were Black. This is ironic since Western Civilization is normally traced to Greece. Yet, this great Greek historian declares that his nation, Greece, borrowed from Egypt all elements of its civilization, including the concept of oracles so critical to its religious and cultural life.

With masterful scholarship, Diop illumines the birth of the myth that Blacks were inconsequential as contributors to and molders of civilization. He also shares insights regarding how Blacks (Africans) lost this leadership role. They became vulnerable due to their indifference to material progress and technical development. They were prey to the economic greed and armed conquest of the West.

Many Blacks view Egyptology in an extremely positive manner. It connotes a discipline devoted to discovering or uncovering treasures of the past. Diop paints a different picture. Egyptologists were in the vanguard falsifying history in support of an ideological agenda of Western, white superiority. This alignment with imperialism required the rejection of their own research. Black Egypt had to be rejected as the progenitor of civilization. Contradictions within their scholarship and research were buried in this search for a white Egypt, the "great white myth."

Although Diop labels his work as a progress report, it is in many ways an indictment of the American educational system. The information and insights within its covers should be required reading in the curricula of the nation's schools. Such curricula, however, would be inconsistent with the purpose of American education according to Dr. Carter G. Woodson.

Education

Woodson considered the educational system as a primary player in the conspiracy against Black people. He wrote the following:

> *The chief difficulty with the education of the Negro is that is has been largely imitation resulting in the enslavement of his mind. Somebody outside of the race has desired to try out on Negroes some experiment which interested him and his coworkers; and Negroes, being objects of charity, have received them cordially and have done what they required. In fact, the keynote in the education of the Negro has been to do what he is told to do. Any Negro who has learned to do this is well prepared to function in the American social order as others would have him.*[68]

Woodson called for greater self-assertion by Black people in determining their issues, priorities, and methodologies. He was disturbed by the fact that Black people allowed so much of their education to be responses to Eurocentric thinking.

Dr. Janice Hale-Benson gives contemporary expression to the same thought in her book, *Black Children*, which is an invaluable contribution to understanding the dynamics of education as they relate to African-American people. The foreword to the first edition written by Asa Hilliard sets its tone as a comprehensive critique of the present educational system. He states:

> *The science of human behavior is in its infancy. Psychology, sociology, anthropology, sociolinguistics, and other related disciplines developed at the same time that Europe was in its ascendancy and was beginning to extend its political control throughout the world. Therefore, while Western behavioral science has developed in this environment, it has also served, frequently, as the handmaiden of colonial expansion and exploitation.*[69]

Dr. Hilliard's understanding of the role of the behavioral sciences assists in clarifying the subjective nature of those sciences. They have never been neutral or objective as they

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[68]Carter G. Woodson, *The Miseducation of the Negro* (Washington: Associate Publishers, 1933), 7.

[69]Asa Hillard, in *Black Children*, Janice Hale-Benson, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1986), XXI.

claim. Indeed, they have been tools of oppression. Their theories and conclusions are, therefore, suspect. Those interested in really empowering the Black community, consequently, need to examine social issues from a viewpoint that is supportive of their goals and concerns. Dr. Hale-Benson is clearly committed to explicating the problems of Black children in the educational arena by assessing the heritage of the children. Black children must be understood in their cultural context. It is this context that forms and informs the child's worldview.

Dr. Hillard further states:

> *When it is established that many African-American families and their children experience a unique cultural configuration, it becomes important to include within the study of African-American children a perspective that comes from the study of culture and cognition. Abundant data shows that culture patterns influence the way information is perceived, organized, processed, and utilized. Consequently a discussion of the growth, development, and "cognition" of the African-American child must take into account that culture is one of the greatest environmental variables. It is at this point that Western behavioral science has failed in the study of African-American children.*[70]

It is also at this point that Dr. Hale-Benson succeeds so well. Her expose underscores the reality that Black children's environment is composed of African retentions residing in the context of America. They are truly African American people.

If more people understood this reality, there would be a greater rejection of the prevailing panacea for poor black educational achievement. This solution is called compensatory education. It results from accepting Western culture as a standard or the norm. Anything not measuring up to the norm is abnormal or substandard. It is an unjust and invalid comparison. The author states that Black children must be at least bi-cultural.

> *Parents and educators must help children straddle these cultures and resolve intercultural conflicts if they are to achieve success in school and in the workplace. I believe that early*

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[70]Ibid., XXLI.

> *childhood educators have a unique opportunity to assist parents in preparing their children to become bi-cultural as in creating responsive, child-centering learning environments.*[71]

The educational system has failed in effectively educating Black children. She begins her book with this assessment. The reason for this failure is due to an extent to mainstreaming Black children to fit a mold that is alien to them. The failure can readily be seen in the number of children who drop out of the system in various ways, i.e., expulsions, placement in classes for "mentally retarded" persons, and the high level of juvenile delinquency. Dr. Carter G. Woodson labeled this mainstreaming as "miseducation." It was a process of brainwashing the oppressed into accepting the values, beliefs, behavior, and mind set of the oppressors. Consequently, it worked against the liberation of Black people. The author describes education of the eighties as education for survival. Black children must develop the tools necessary to survive in an increasingly competitive society. According to the author:

> *We must create an educational system that not only celebrates African-American culture but also imbues black children with the skills they need to survive in this society and to contribute to its creative development.*[72]

The hypothesis of the book, *Black Children*, is that "Black Children" grow up in a distinctive culture. Black children, therefore, need an educational system that recognizes their strengths, their abilities, and their culture and that incorporates them into the learning process. The research in the book indicates that certain characteristics, peculiar to Black children, are retentions from Africa. These characteristics become part of the child rearing process and have profound implications for the way Black children learn and think.

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[71]Janice Hale-Benson, *Black Children* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), XI.

[72]Ibid.

Dr. Hale-Benson cites the works of white American anthropologist, Melville Herskovits, to support her claim that Africa was not totally wiped out of the soul and mind of the slave. There are also many indications that the slaves resisted accepting the worldview of their enslavers. Forms of resistance included slave revolts, running away and the destruction of crops and tools. Some of the aspects of Black culture reflecting an African influence are the following:

Motor Habits:	*(Walking, speaking, laughing, sitting, postures, burden carrying, dancing, singing, and movements made in various agricultural and industrial activities.*
Concept of Time:	*Black people think in terms of approximation time rather than punctuality. (CPT)*
Ways of Dressing Hair:	*(Wrapping, braiding, cornrowing)*
Cooperation and Sharing:	*(Black people have expressed an orientation toward collective responsibility and interdependence.)*
Child-rearing Practices:	*(Corporal punishment — whipping is used in disciplining children. The most common instrument is the "switch"...)*
Adoption of Children:	*(Black people exhibit a strong orientation toward adopting children.) Robert T. Hill (1972) has pointed out that Black people don't go to adoption agencies to adopt children; their applications would be rejected. However, an informal system of adoption operates, herein usually older women will care for children when their families need assistance.)*[73]

Cultural factors should be taken into consideration in order to effectively educate Black children. Culture clearly influences cognition. One of the primary components of culture is the family. The family does play an important role in the educational processes, both formal and informal. While much as being said regarding the dysfunctionality of Black families, little has been done to understand the strengths of these families and how the strengths could be maximized in behalf of their children's education.

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[73]Ibid., 16.

> *Robert B. Hill (1972) suggests that "the preoccupation with pathology in most research on Black families has obscured some fruitful avenues of investigation." He contends that examining the strengths of Black families can contribute as much toward understanding and ameliorating social problems as examining their weaknesses. He suggests further that "if, as most scholars agree, there is a need to strengthen Black families, then a first-order priority should be the identification of presently existing strengths and resources." Dr. Hill identifies and analyses five such strengths: Strong kinship bonds, strong achievement orientation, adaptability of family roles, strong religious orientation, and strong work orientation. He maintains that these five characteristics have been functional for the survival, advancement, and stability of Black families.*[74]

One of the contributions of Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu is the expansion of our understanding of family to include not merely biological relatives, but the larger community. He solicits acceptance of responsibility — for the teacher's performance as well as that of the child. Wedded to responsibility is the notion of expectations of adhering to certain standards and goals.

> *Studies of the poor American family's role in children's achievements have often focused on household composition, specifically the presence or absence of the father in the home, as the major factor. These studies have argued that the two-parent intact family yas a positive effect on the child's school performance, whereas the one-parent broken family has a negative effect.*[75]

In his book, *Family Life and School Achievement*, he examines other qualities. He states that the overall quality of the family life style has more to do with achievement than the number of parents or children in the family, education, or income.

This was a surprising and significant revelation. It means that low achievement should not automatically be equated with poverty, large families, or limited education of the parents. Dr. Clark indicates that a feeling of optimism about life and life's potential offerings for the child is an important ingredient in child rearing toward high achievement. If parents appear

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[74]Ibid., 47.

[75]Reginald M. Clark, *Family Life and School Achievement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, ____), 1.

to have some control over their environment and communicate this to their children through the way they interact, the child will receive the nourishment ţthat promotes success. Conversely, if there is a negative understanding of life or life seems to overwhelm the parent(s), this sense of defeat will impede achievement.

The belief in the past that education was the key to social progress had an important impact. Although it was often thought of in terms of integration, it still motivated young people with the possibility of full — or at least limited — inclusion in partaking of the material benefits of the society. If the necessary vision and interacting are missing at home, surrogate families, such as the church, could provide the motivation.

On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court of the United States declared that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal" and that in the field of public education the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place. This decision was a reversal of Plessy vs. Ferguson which in 1896 established the "separate but equal" doctrine. The decision supported the right of Black people to attend any and all public schools, rather than being denied access purely on racial grounds. The Court in this landmark case, Brown vs. Board of Education, also declared that "education was perhaps the most important function of the State... the very foundation of good citizenship."

De jure desegregation was declared illegal while de facto segregation flourished. This "progress" carried with it a tremendous and, perhaps, irrevocable loss. The community and racial values carved out of segregation that made African Americans a great people in the midst of segregation were uprooted. They were communal rather than individualistic values. The values included the notion that each child was everybody's child, respect for the elders, learning as a responsibility, and belief in the self-worth of each person. There was bonding between teachers and parents. Teaching and learning occurred regardless of class size or the number of classes in the same room.

The question of equal access to education was subverted into a belief in the superiority of white, Eurocentric education. Black parents announced with pride that their children were attending the "white" school. Obviously, the school was not white if Black children were attending. Blacks quit learning from what had been accomplished during segregation in the quest for "integration."

Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu clearly points to the idea of a conspiracy against Black boys. He articulates components of the conspiracy in the following excerpt:

> *Those people who actively promote drugs and gang violence are active conspirators and easier to identify. What makes the conspiracy more complex are those people who do not plot together to destroy Black boys, but, through their indifference, perpetuate it. The passive group of conspirators consists of parents, educators, and white liberals who deny racist, but allow institutional racism to continue through their silence to continue.*[76]

Especially arresting was the author's explanation of the fourth grade failure syndrome. Research indicates that Black boys begin a downward spiral of achievement after the third grade. While the lack of male teachers in kindergarten and the primary grades may contribute to a building sense of anomie, the problem goes beyond this failure of our society. It includes a racist and irrelevant curriculum designed for plantation "niggers." Its purpose is to perpetuate the status quo.

The status quo includes not caring for Black boys and having little expectation that they will do well in school. Dr. Kunjufu argues that parents should seize control over their schools. They are the ones who should determine the acceptance or rejection standards of education. If the level of education is unacceptable parents should keep their children at home or have the teacher removed. Dr. Kunjufu states that cultural strategies must be developed to counter the conspiracy. Culture is distinguished from pop culture which is often

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[76]Kunjufu Jawanza, *Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys* (Chicago: African American Images, 1985), 1.

orchestrated by the controllers of the system. Culture is the vehicle through which meaning is carried. It is the lifestyle resulting from the embodiment of a worldview. "Culture is the lifestyle which results from the world view, culture is the carrier of meaning." Helping to nurture boys into manhood should be part of Black culture. The components of black culture — religion, education, politics, art, aesthetics, economics — must transcend that status quo and define Black life in ways that counter the destruction of Black boys.

Black Women

Black womanist writers are among the insurrectionists bringing previously suppressed knowledge to the forefront. Their insights are particularly cogent and potent because of the orchestrated false rivalry with Black men. Black women have distinct voices which too long and too often have been denied formal avenues of expression. If Black people are to move forward in the quest for empowerment, Black women's voices must be heard. A common thread in many of the writings of Black women is a commitment to a Black peoplehood that embodies a sense of wholeness. This wholeness cannot be achieved unless and until some serious problems are addressed. Among them is the denial that sexism really exists.

Since much of sexism derives from the church, the Bible is a good place to begin to understand its pervasiveness. God is presumed to be male because Adam — the man, first human — is made in God's image. Eve is said to have been created from one of Adam's ribs. Neither God nor humankind is seen as androgynous as in some of the ancient Egyptian religious systems. Eve is told that Adam (her husband) shall rule over her. This comes in the fallen state of humanity, indicative of its separation from the intentional will of God; yet, it has been taken as a decree from God. The Hebrew scriptures have enough exploitation without incorrectly claiming this particular passage as portraying the ideal relationship between women and men. Such a claim is a distortion of the message of the text. The lives of

the patriarchs are depicted. The women in the passages are not the main characters. They exist as accessories to the men. Because this fact is so pervasive in the scriptures, the Bible has been used to foster sexism. New hermeneutics need to be brought to the scriptures.

Dr. Renita Weems does this in an extremely creative way. She focuses on women's relationships in the Bible. She cites examples of women exploiting other women, women forming alliances, supporting each other, and networking. She deals with economic differences as well as religious and cultural ones. She also avoids leaving the narratives within the covers of the Bible by posing questions for thought.

Paula Giddings takes the reader on a journey loaded with fabulous biographic information, great spiritual insights, and important historical (herstorical) information. *When and Where I Enter* journeys through the roles played by Black women in the African American struggle for freedom and the women's struggle for quality. Black women have brought their distinct concerns, values, and genius to both movements. The author states her purpose in writing the book was the following:

> *...to write a narrative history of Black women, tracing their concerns — and what they did about them — from the seventeenth century to the contemporary period.*[77]

Her research revealed that many of the people who fought against the rights of Blacks also fought against the rights of wome n. There is interplay between the evils of racism and sexism.

> *Of course, Black women could understand the relationship between racism and sexism because they had to strive against both. In doing so they became the linchpin between two of the most important social reform movements in American history: the struggle for Black rights and women's rights. In the course of defying the imposed limitations on race and sex, they loosened the chains around both.*[78]

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[77]Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter* (New York: Morrow, 1984), 6.

[78]Ibid., 7.

Dr. Angela Davis' book, *Women, Race and Class*, is an interesting complement to Paula Giddings' work. The author brought to light the lives of many Black women about whom little is known. There was a consistent theme in the women's lives. It was understanding that freedom for them was connected to freedom for the entire Black community. Often their dedication to the freedom of Blacks as a race was at the expense of their feminist yearnings. The rights of Black women have to be secured if the race is to fully realize its potential.

Bell Hooks is outrageous and a very serious, sensitive writer. She begins her collection of essay, *Talking Back*, with the observation of the difficulty of disclosure, opening up, sharing, especially through a public platform. Even to speak out when you are supposed to remain silent is an act of courage. It can also be an act of revolution.

> *The history of colonization, imperialism is a record of betrayal, of lies, and deceits. The demand for that which is real is a demand for reparation, for transformation. In resistance, the exploited, the oppressed work to expose the false reality — to reclaim and recover ourselves. We make the revolutionary history, telling the past as we have learned it mouth-to-mouth, telling the present as we see, know, and feel it our hearts and with our words. In keeping with this spirit, I have approached these talks, essays, and comments by rooting them in personal reflection, in thinking feminist and thinking black.*[79]

The fragmentation in the Black and larger community can only be made whole through sharing stories and becoming vulnerable in the process. Her description of the world of women talk was intriguing.

> *Black men may have excelled in the art of poetic preaching in the male-dominating church, but in the church of the home, where the everyday rules of how to live and how to act were established, it was black women who preached. There, black women spoke in a language so rich, so poetic, that it felt to me like being shut off from life, smothered to death if one were not allowed to participate. It was in that world of women talk (the men were often silent, often absent) that was born in me the craving to speak, to have a voice, and not just any voice but one that could be identified as belonging to me.*[80]

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[79]Bells Hooks, *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist Thoughts* (Boston: South End Press, 1989), 3.

[80]Ibid., 5.

The author shared with June Jordan and other Black writers the need for the public self to be consistent with the private self. The personal is political. Her account of homosexuality in her home community was unanticipated. She described a greater sense of status being given to gay men than to lesbians. She emphasizes the validity of that life style for those who accept it. One of her concerns in writing that particular essay was to prevent further hatred and fragmentation in the Black community.

In her book, *Black Feminist Thought*, Dr. Patricia Hill Collins states that Black women's oppression has been structured along three interdependent lines or dimensions:

> *First, the exploitation of black women's labor — the iron pots and kettles symbolizing black women's long-standing ghettoization in service occupations — represents the economic dimension of oppression. Second, the political dimension of oppression has denied African-American women the rights and privileges routinely extended to white male citizens. The large number of young Black women in inner cities and impoverished rural areas who continue to leave school before attaining full literacy represent the continued efficacy of the political dimension of black women's oppression. Finally, the controlling images of Black women that originated during the slave era attest to the ideological dimension of Black oppression. Ideology represents the process by which certain assumed qualities are attached to Black Women and how those qualities are used to justify oppression.*[81]

The author asserts that this suppression of Black women's ideas has profoundly influenced feminist theory. The absence has created a void in interpretation of both women's history and African American history as correctives to standard American history. This results in a deficient worldview.

Dr. Collins suggests that African American women look at Africentrism in their struggle for a self-defined standpoint.

> *While Black people were forced to adapt these Afrocentric belief systems in the face of different institutional arrangements of white domination, the continuation of an Afrocentric worldview has been fundamental to African-American resistance to racial oppression. In other words, being Black encompasses both experiencing white domination and individual and group valuation of an independent, long-standing Afrocentric consciousness.*

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[81]Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (New York: Rutledge, 1991), 6-7.

> *African-American women draw on this Afrocentric worldview to cope with racial oppression. But far too often Black women's Afrocentric consciousness remains unarticulated and not fully developed into a self-defined standpoint. In societies that denigrate African ideas and peoples, the process of valuing an Afrocentric worldview is the result of self-conscious struggle.*[82]

Dr. Collins defined Black feminism "as a process of self-conscious struggle that empowers women and men to actualize a humanistic vision of community." This is an inclusive definition that invites men to become part of Black feminism. The struggles between Black men and women over issues such as ordination, the right to choose termination of pregnancy and domestic violence must become a priority for redress. The resolution of them or at least the serious engagement of them has profound implications for the future of the Black community. At the Graduate Theological Union, these are serious issues.

Black Men

Paul Hill's book, *Coming of Age: The African American Male Rites of Passage*, is a significant exposition of the plight of African American males and the potential of rites-of-passage programs to nurture a new generation of Black men defining their own existence. The book fulfills its author's claim of being both diagnostic and prescriptive. Hill further states that the book has a mission:

> *It is a proactive work in that it calls upon the collective consciousness, will, knowledge, and creativity of the black community to institutionalize Rites of Passage as part of the socialization process for rearing male children in a society hostile to their presence and committed to their destruction.*[83]

There has been a growing feeling that such programs are necessary to provide structure, limits, and discipline. They are vastly superior to the trial and error method which

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[82]Ibid., 27.

[83]Paula Hill, *Coming of Age: The African American Male Rites of Passage* (Chicago: African American Images, 1992), 13.

characterized many pilgrimages to manhood. Discussing manhood in itself is therapeutic. For too long, it has been presumed that boys automatically grow into men if they live to be twenty-one years of age.

The book begins dramatically by describing the role of an African-American male as being hazardous. This is the opposite of what it has been for European-Americans. The author quotes Dr. Alvin Poussaint to substantiate his viewpoint:

> *No one can deny that being a black man in America is a high-risk adventure. The social and health status of the Black male is alarming. The life expectancy at birth is about sixty-four years for black men, seventy years for White men, seventy-three years for Black women, and over seventy-seven years for White women. Black males have higher age-adjusted death rates for cancer, heart disease, cirrhosis of the liver, strokes, accident, and lung disease than white males, white females and black females. The leading cause of death among young black men has become Black-on-Black homicide. And significantly, about forty-five percent of police killings in recent years have been of black men who are, in general, frequent victims of police brutality. The suicide rate of young black males has more than doubled since the 1960's and is more than four times the suicide rate of a comparable group of Black females.*[84]

The author later states that suicide was the third leading cause of death after accidents and homicide for African American males aged fifteen to twenty-four. This was especially difficult to absorb given the surprising fact that the overwhelming majority of Black teen males aged fifteen to nineteen live with a family (97.2). Mr. Hill used the term fatalistic to describe most suicides. Black males are so overwhelmed by external pressures, regulations, and hazards that they feel impotent to overcome them. They are incapable of turning their rage into power.

Demographics will force some changes in American society. The question is the nature of those changes. The author gives the following description of the change in demographics:

> *The new demographics show that African Americans, who currently make up eleven percent of the work force, will account for almost one-fifth of all labor force entrants in the years*

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[84]Ibid., 18.

> *ahead. The nation will have fewer youngsters than in the past and more of them will be Black and Brown. These facts have important implications, among them the Military and the Social Security System. The nation's rapidly aging White middle-class will draw its retirement income from an increasingly Black and Hispanic work force. The nation's defense will depend increasingly on Blacks and Browns in uniform.*[85]

Two consequences of this will be increased dependency on plans other than Social Security for retirement and raiding of the social security system to balance budgets.

The demographics could also justify (from white society's point of view) an even more concerted effort to socialize Blacks away from the interest of the Black community. Rites of Passage could be critical to defeating such an effort. Inherent in any Rites-of-Passage Program is the incorporation of a curriculum reflecting historical and cultural dimensions. These programs teach about empowerment and its relationship to Black community and the nation.

Visions For Black Men is an effective treatment of a crucial subject, the experience of African American men. The author, Dr. Na`im Akbar, employs spiritual and historical perspectives in assessing the situation. Consequently, the potential fatalism of the present crisis is transcended and transformed into visions of a new reality.

Too narrow a focus on the present crisis betrays the comprehensive understanding needed to move forward. It is the "present" crisis in a perpetual state of crisis. The survival of African American men is testimony to their miraculous determination to be free. According to the author, "African American men have been subjected to the most consistent and devastating assault unleashed against human life in modern history of humanity." They were never intended to survive. Their survival defies this assault.

To approach the problem from an essentially negative focus would lead to reactionary solutions aborting the creation of a new people. This progressive movement requires a vision. Dr. Akbar says the following of the vision:

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[85]Ibid., 23.

> *This vision for black men must have several elements. On the one hand, it must be panoramic in its integration of ancient and pre-European intervention African experience, the experience of the American holocaust (i.e. slavery), the consequences of white supremacy and racism, and the contemporary European American socialization, with regard to the impact of each of these experiences on the African American reality. It must break away from the traditional social science conceptions of linear time (i.e., events moving systematically from past to present to future) with present causative factors being most influential. It must consider that life events and causative factors cannot be gleaned from observations of the immediate circumstances, but must understand the interplay of multiple and metaphysical causation (i.e., future reality can determine present and former events)...*[86]

The vision must also be wholistic. It must take into account physical/material realities, mental/social realities and spiritual/moral values. These dimensions are manifested throughout the work. It is therefore, more than a handbook. The vision is one for African-American women as well as men. Indeed, it is for African peoples as a whole. Dr. Akbar emphatically states that the conditions facing African-American women are inseparable from those facing African-American men. There is no place for debating who is the most oppressed. The author focuses on African-American men for strategic reasons, not because the conditions facing the women are less significant.

The author employs an analogy of a caterpillar and butterfly. The butterfly represents human potential and, concomitantly, greater control over one's survival. The caterpillar has a more hazardous existence because it has greater limits on its vision and less advantageous points of reference. Vision is critical for movement. The enhanced vision illumines other perspectives on life's problems.

The distinction between the author's definition of maleness and that of manhood was clear, helpful, and challenging. A male is a biological entity. It is determined by the anatomy. The author states that maleness is also a mentality that functions in a manner similar to that of biology. This mentality is driven by urges that demand immediate response,

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[86]Ibid., 1x.

gratification, indulgence with no concept of waiting or consequences. Dr. Akbar states that African-Americans imitate Euro-Americans too much. He makes the frightening assertion that this is the first generation of African-Americans who do not know that they are on a plantation. This results from delivering Black children to plantation masters to be educated. It is the responsibility of men to build their own institutions to depict their reality. Even through Black men have abdicated so much responsibility, the force of Maat has steered Black people on a course of survival. It is imperative for African-Americans to seize this time to establish authority over themselves and priorities for their people.

Contrary to President-Dean of the GTU, [redacted], the Black Church is still vehicular to the Black empowerment movement. Effective leadership in urban America and areas influenced by urban America is dependent upon understanding Black life in its varied dimensions, its relationship to the Black church, and the needs of the Black Church to become more Africentric. One of the opportunities of theological educational institutions is to incorporate creatively these dimensions into their lives as they presume to prepare women and men for ministry.

DEFINING THE AFRICENTRIC CHURCH

The Black Church must be concerned about and minister to conditions beyond the walls of the church buildings. It is clear that at times the Black Church has been to a great extent an ally of the Black community's struggle to survive. A present challenge facing it is to move beyond survival to empowerment for the next century. Black churches must embrace a frameworking in order to tap into its resources and maximize its potential.

This framework, too often, has been Eurocentric; thereby short-circuiting its power. The Black Church needs to become Africentric. It must appropriate from its African past affirmation of its intrinsic worth and conceptual frameworks which free rather than strangle

creative avenues of self-determination and empowerment. Dr. Jeremiah Wright, pastor of Trinity Church of Christ, articulates the challenge in the following way:

> *Moving from the premise — as a Black pastor who is cut from the same cloth of oppression, racism, and powerlessness which inner city Blacks experience — the pastor joins with the members of our congregation to combine the words of Jesus ("Love Thyself") and the dictum erroneously ascribed to Socrates — but actually found on all the ancient pilars guarding the entrances to the African Mystery Religion temples (3,000 B.C.) — "Know thyself," to form the conceptual framework out of which we operate as we attempt to build on the cultural strengths already resident within the black community.*
>
> *The unfortunate overarching motif in the Black community, which has either been overtly taught by or surreptitiously learned from the dominant culture for the past 100 years, has been Black self-hatred, to aspire to European values, or to become Euro-Christian, which is the same as literally being washed "whiter than snow!" That motif negates our black cultural heritage and history and repeats (with the same amount of arrogance) the mistakes made by New England missionaries (Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Episcopal, etc.) as they tried to re-create African slaves in their own images! We reject that model of ministry, and start from the cultural strengths already in existence within the Black tradition as we go about our theological and evangelical tasks (i.e., modeling the ministry of Jesus; being faithful of the Great commission) and spreading the gospel of Liberation to persons of every educational and economic level within the Black community.*[87]

The ministries of the Africentric Church deal with issues of powerlessness. Dr. Wright delineates numerous areas of ministry including: Food-Co-op which deals with the lack of fresh fruits and vegetables in the city; Housing Ministry which deals with the problem of abandoned and boarded up houses which were lost by Black homeowners, redlining, and "displaced" families; Child Care which provides educational fundamentals for Black children; and Education Ministry which provides tutorial services and other programs tailored to the needs of Chicago inner city Blacks; and Political Education. "Educating constituents as to all the nuances and subtleties of the racist political system operative in Chicago, and suggesting

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[87]Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr., *Perspectives: A View from Within* (Chicago: Trinity United Church of Christ, 1982), 36.

ways to address that system as free children of the Most High King, is a very definite part of our ministry at Trinity."[88]

This is the kernel of the programmatic thrust of an Africentric Church. Timothy Johnson suggests that the adoption of Africentrism by the Black Church is indispensable to the mental health of the Black community. He imparts the following observation: "...the degree to which a black church is removed from the culture and realities of African Americans is the same degree by which it impacts negatively upon the mental health of its members."[89]

Since its inception, there has been a dynamic relationship between the Black Church and the mental health of its members.

> *The Black Church was founded on the basis of protest. It was protestation against the false epistemology and false cosmology of Whites regarding the place and person of black folk in the world. It was the slaves' active effort to structure within a physically and psychologically harmful society a protective cocoon which would be nutritive to social and mental health. There was within the "Invisible Church" an essential link between the theology and praxis of the community and the social realities its members face.*[90]

Johnson continues his argument.

> *Institutional racism is the manifestation of pernicious Eurocentric cosmology that leaves no room for other cosmologies. By its very nature, White western culture seeks to co-opt, bastardize, or eliminate any cosmological framework which would depose it. It is within this ideological context that the Black Church exists. There is spiritual warfare that seeks to destroy the hearts and mind of African Americans within the very institution which they claim to be fully theirs. Only as the Black Church becomes Afrocentric will it be strong against the external threats to its well-being and effectiveness.*[91]

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[88]Ibid., 38.

[89]Timothy J. Johnson, "The Black Church as an Afrocentric Institution," *The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center* (Atlanta: Fall, 1989 / Spring, 1990, Vol. XVII), 134.

[90]Ibid., 136.

[91]Ibid., 137.

Comprehending Africalogy helps in understanding the Africentric Church. Africalogy or Africentricity is a discipline that embraces and explicates phenomena in terms of their relationship to their relevance to Africa on the continent and in the diaspora. One of the leading proponents of Africalogy, Dr. Molefi Asante, has enunciated with clarity that it addresses not only conditions as they are but searches for what ought to be. Africalogical research is consciously subjective rather than objective. Africentricity puts the experiences of African peoples at the center of history and inquiry.

> *Afrocentricity leads to acceptance or creation of only those things which enhance and nurture the African community. It is not rejection of the validity of other perspectives, but acceptance of our perspective as the only workable cosmological approach to life for African people. Unlike Eurocentric perspective, it does not impose itself as a universal perspective which denies the validity of other perspectives. Rather, it demands respect as valid for African Americans, even as it respects other perspectives as valid for those ethnic expressions they encompass. The Black Church, as a primary institution in black communities, must become a place which reinforces psychological wholeness. In order to achieve such, it must become Afrocentric.*[92]

Africalogical Theism is the elucidation of God's movement in the lives of African people. It is transdisciplinary as well as interdisciplinary. It addresses issues of power. Relevant theological education must take into consideration the following.

> *Africans were brought to the New World as part and parcel of an international system of trade and communication; the meanings of the cultures of the former, colonized in the modern world, carry the same implications. Religious forms and expressions are the sources of new worlds of meaning; the study and understanding of Black religion has much to contribute to our future.*[93]

Students who seek to be effective ministers addressing the needs of the Black community need a dynamic relationship with that community. This orientation is provided by Black Church Studies programs, one form of Africentric theological education.

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[92]Ibid., 138.

[93]Op. Cit., Charles H. Long, 47.

> *The primary public for Black Church Studies is the Black community. The African American churches certainly embody, in a specific way, the concerns and aspiration of African Americans. Yet one cannot understand or assess the Black Church outside of the Black community. Nor can one fully understand the Black community without attention to the Black Church. Therefore students are equipped to fill the needs of Black churches for trained leadership and they are also encouraged to subject the total economic, social, cultural, and political experience of Black people to critical analysis. The goal of this educational process is the transformation of the structures of injustice afflicting black people both in and out of the church. The emphasis is on praxis and critical reflection within the biosphere of African Americans. In this schema education is viewed as advocacy scholarship. There is no neutral or disinterested learning: All learning and teaching either supports or opposes the status quo. Because Black Church Studies begins with the black community as the locus of struggle and redemption, theological knowledge is always both critical and constructive. This knowledge destroys stereotypes and false images. It also brings to light the hidden resources and potential of the Black community. The kind of curriculum that results from this perspective is directed curriculum. The curriculum is directed toward presenting and discovering usable knowledge for the black community and, by extension, for humanity at large.*[94]

The purpose of the Model of Ministry presented in this document is consistent with Dr. Evans' explication. It was not undertaken to gain abstract knowledge. It was to develop an effective tool to help transform the Black community and nation.

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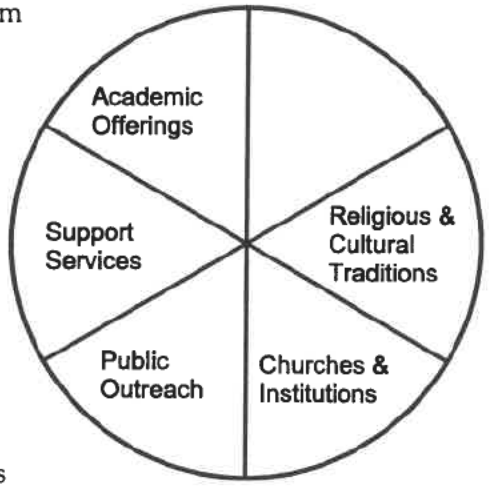
[94]James, H. Evans, Jr., "Black Church Studies and the Theological Curriculum," in *African American Religious Studies*, Gayrud S. Wilmore, Ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 32.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION OF THE MODEL

If we — and now I mean the relatively conscious whites and the relatively conscious blacks, who must, like lovers, insist on, or create, the consciousness of the others — do not falter in our duty now, we may be able, handful that we are, to end the racial nightmare, and achieve our country, and change, the history of the world. If we do not now dare everything, the fulfillment of that prophecy, recreated from the Bible in song by a slave, is upon us: GOD GAVE NOAH THE RAINBOW SIGN, NO MORE WATER, THE FIRE NEXT TIME![95]

The Model of Ministry posits including Africentrism in theological education at the GTU in the areas depicted by the graph. One piece of the pie is left blank. This represents the fact that there will still be needs unmet and new areas of theological education will emerge — i.e., the growing edge.



The chart also represents the institutionalization of prophetic ministry. Theological educational institutions have a responsibility to provide leadership in the quest for creative, social transformation. The delineation gives a practical format for institutional monitoring and evaluation. The areas identified are also the foci of the Center for Urban-Black Studies.

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[95]James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (New York: The Dial Press, 1963), 199.

Academic Offerings:

1. Include new Africentric classes in the Master of Divinity and Master of Arts curricula. Courses would address the Black religious tradition, Black religious leaders and leadership, racism in interchurch and societal relationships, and urban America.
2. Design a Doctor of Ministry Program in an area of interest to Black ministers. Suggestions include: Africentric Pastoring and Preaching; Ministry in Urban America; Social Change Ministry; Re-conceptualizing The Family and Community Life; Education As Ministry; Outreach Ministry; and Issues of Health and Wholeness.
3. A curriculum should be instituted for ministers and other religious leaders who do not possess a theological degree. This curriculum should reflect the varying backgrounds in theological educational training and competence. This could ultimately lead to Africentric certification for the religious leadership. The diverse learning styles inherent in the Black community would determine the pedagogies.
4. Implement the Martin Luther King, Jr. Lecture Series. This entails sponsoring an outstanding Africentric scholar as guest lecturer. The lectures would be open to the larger community as well as the GTU.

Support Services:

1. Africentric counseling would assist seminarians in adapting their Eurocentric education to the realities of the Black experience. This would include identifying alternatives to existing methods and centers which assess fitness for ministry. Presently at these centers Black seminarians are consistently described as too angry and needing to adjust their anger. Seminarians state that there are no African Americans among

those doing the evaluating. In addition the psychologists and psychiatrists employed seem bereft of any understanding of the sociology of racism.

2. Field education experiences would be coordinated through the Center for Urban-Black Studies. This would provide praxis for the seminarians as well as support personnel for3 working on the many urgent needs of the black community.
3. Mentoring students would assist in ministry formation. This would include studying churches and other agencies with effective urban ministries.
4. Consultations with the Black community and larger general community would increase the consciousness of the importance and contributions of Africentrism.

Churches and Institutions / Religious and Cultural Traditions:

1. Matching skills and talents of church members with the needs of the larger Black community would effectively demonstrate the African concept of family. It would also empower the community.
2. Interchurch youth forums would foster dialogue, cooperation, a sense of community, movement, and hope.
3. Linkages must be correlated between domestic racism and global exploitation. For ex*f*ample, African Americans must understand the underlying causes of the war against Iraq, and the role of the military and transnational corporations promoting imperialism against people of color. This conceptualization would include comprehending the repatriation of Haitian refugees and the embargo against Cuba.
4. Attention must be given to utilizing alternative media to ensure that all voices are heard.
5. Regular community forums would transmit cultural heritage, support our artists, and develop new leadership.

Public Outreach:

1. Wider diversity in those attending "Conversations" would enhance them as instruments for community input in the life and direction of the center. "Conversations" entail the public presentation of people significantly involved with the church and/or community. The speakers address contemporary issues affecting the Urban-Black community. Issues as diverse as AIDS, affirmative action, education, women in ministry, and current Africentric scholarship would be appropriate.
2. Dissemination and interpretation of information about the GTU to the larger community would lead to greater exchange between the communities.
3. Development of ways to make the Center's and GTU's resources available.

Goals:

From my cabin window I look out on the full moon, and the ghost of my forefathers rise and fall with the undulating waves. Across the same waters how many years ago they came! What were the inchoate mutterings locked tight within the circle of their hearts? In the deep, heavy darkness of the foul-smelling hole of the ship, where they could not see the sky, nor hear the night noises, nor feel the warm compassion of the tribe, they held their breath against the agony.[96]

There is the hope that melodies of freedom will arise from the agony.

The goals of the Model of Ministry were the following:

1. For the Graduate Theological Union to take i;ts relationship to the Black Church community more seriously.
2. For the Black Church to define its own needs and priorities more clearly.
3. For the Center for Urban-Black Studies to become again a visible and essential link between the GTU and the Black Church community.

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[96]Anne Spencer Thurman, *For the Inward Journey: The Writings of Howard Thurman* (New York, London: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Publishers, 1984), 199.

These goals were both qualitative and quantitative. Goal #1 was met in the following ways:

a. An interest has developed to offer more academic experiences in the Black community including regular courses, new courses, internships, and lectures/convocations.

b. A major lectureship named in honor of Dr. Howard Thurman is being projected. (Appendix 5.)

c. A nationally recognized Black pastor has been elected to the Board of Trustees of the GTU.

d. Discussions regarding hiring a Black faculty member are in process at one of the seminaries.

e. One of the seminaries has hired a Black clergywoman to teach a course on the Black preaching tradition.

f. Funds have been allocated to the Black seminarians to host this year's meeting of the National Alliance of Pan African Seminarians.

The following needs and priorities have been identified by the Black Church in fulfillment of Goal #2.

1. Doctor of Ministry program dealing with African American ministries in an Urban context.
2. Continuing education programs.
3. Assistance in training lay leaders.
4. Providing information about the Black Church and community.
5. Special courses designed for Black ministers who do not have theological degrees.

6. Practical help in dealing with social issues such as homelessness, AIDS, crime, drugs and jobs.
7. Community development.
8. Funding sources for churches.
9. How to attract and keep Black males and young people in church.

Goal #3 was met in the following ways:

1. Recruitment of students to the GTU — including disseminating information and assisting in evaluating the limits and opportunities of the various schools.
2. Informing the Black community about the GTU's resources.
3. Inviting the Black community to the GTU to attend "Conversations," book reviews, receptions, and consultations.
4. Informing the Black community of visiting Black clergy, professors, and laity.
5. Supporting visiting Black speakers.
6. Being visible at significant events in the Black community.
7. Speaking engagements in the Black community.
8. Providing information about the Black community as a guest lecturer in GTU classes.

Implementation of the Model

There is a way of breaking the cycle of pain and moving forward with our lives. Somebody wants to know how. Well, first we need to use God's perspective. God's perspective helps us to see things in a different way, from a different vantage point, and with a different angle of vision. God's perspective helps us to keep a balanced view of our problems, our potential, and our possibilities.[97]

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[97]Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr., *What Makes You So Strong?* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1993), 34.

It is important to understand that the world is more than a collection of human beings, their inventions, and machinations. It is also the creation and dwelling place of God. As such, there is an eternal dimension built in the fabric of the world. Humankind's actions, therefore, need to be viewed in the light of how they relate to God's intentions in creation.

Social institutions, although created by human beings, are not exempted from this interrelationship. Institutions of theological education are included. They must be measured by how they support and/or subvert intentions of the creator. These intentions include the promotion of justice and the unity of human kind.

Step #1 of the model was to identify decision makers: administrators, (particularly presidents and deans), faculty, and trustees. Included were organizations of decision-makers: Council of Presidents; Council of Deans; and the Affiliates' Committee of the GTU Board of Trustees.

Step #2 entailed identifying persons and organizations who could influence decision-makers and the decision making processes: administrators (particularly presidents and deans); faculty (particularly Black faculty and the Racial Ethnic Faculty Association); Black trustees; students (The GTU Black Seminarians and Students Organized Against Racism); Black clergy; and other members of the larger Black community.

Step #3 was educational. It involved defining the theological education at the GTU as Eurocentric. Clarification of the existing system of theological education was essential.

Step #4. Eurocentric theological education was evaluated as incomplete education and neither universal nor neutral. Indeed, it was particularistic and perpetuated the system of European dominance. It imposed a view and an understanding of life that promoted division rather than unity, injustice rather than justice.

Step #5 was an assessment of the consequences of such education. Seminarians and other students were being inadequately prepared to meet the challenges of the Urban-Black

Church and larger community. This resulted from the limited perspectives of those entrusted with the responsibility of preparing religious leadership. The exclusion of insights and experiences from the African Diaspora was miseducation.

Step #6 embodied convincing people that to acquiesce to Eurocentrism was to participate in the continuation of sin and destruction. It meant participating, whether overtly or covertly, in the conspiracy to destroy black people (to extrapolate from the writings of Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu).

Step #7 was defining the ways to correct the Eurocentrism of the GTU. This was the process of projecting the programs listed in the goal section of this document. The guiding ßquestion was that of how to include Africentrism in theological education at the GTU.

Step #8 was consciousness raising with the decision-makers. This was the defining of education at the GTU as Eurocentric with those who were responsible for the operation of the institution. Again, Eurocentrism was defined as incomplete and neither universal nor neutral. It was here that the consequences of racism for theological education were discussed.

Step #9 was the interchange between decision-maker and those who could influence them in behalf of infusing the GTU community with Africentrism. This interchange and nurturing occurred on several levels through varied venues.

Step #10 was the agreement to include programs reflecting an Africentric perspective in the theological education of the GTU. Some of the specific programs, The Howard Thurman Lectureship for example, were not a part of the initial goals.

Step #11 was the development of appropriate strategies to implement the changes (additions). This normally took the form of committees. Much of the leadership at this phase came from persons within the particular seminaries or persons attached to the GTU administration.

Results

Academic Offerings:

1. The director of the Center for Urban-Black Studies has been contracted by Starr King School for The Ministry to teach the course: "The Search For Common Ground/An Introduction to the Life And Thought of Howard Thurman." Students from throughout the GTU have enrolled in the course and have expressed a new sense of hope for their ministries after being exposed to the insights and legacy of Black America's most prolific religious author.
2. Two courses that had been taught several years prior by the director of CUBS have been resurrected. One of the courses, "The Future of Urban Ministry," is (Appendix 7) being taught by the director of CUBS through a contract with SKSM. The other course, Church and Race, (Appendix 7) is being taught jointly by an African American graduate student and an Asian American graduate student. They are being supervised by the director of CUBS (an African American) and an Asian American professor.

Support Service

1. **Consultations:**

   Pacific School of Religion — "Urban Ministry Symposium"

   Graduate Theological Union — Multi-Cultural Affairs Committee

   Starr King School For The Ministry — Long-Range Planning Committee

   Racial Ethnic Faculty Association — Monthly Meetings; Community Outreach Event

   OXFAM America/Oakland — Hunger Project

2. **Work with Black Seminarians**

Individual Counseling

Black History Programming

Black Seminarians' Conference

3. **Speaking Engagements:**

Church For The Fellowship of All Peoples/S.F. — World Religions Series

McGee Avenue Baptist Church/Berkeley — Youth Graduation & Stewardship Sunday

KPFA Radio/Berkeley — Black Spirituality Program

San Quentin Prison — Good Friday Worship Service

Boalt Hall Law Students/University of California — Civil Rights Speakers' eries

International War Crimes Tribunal — Inquiry Hearings: "The War At Home"

City of Alameda — March Against Racism/Rally Speaker

Contra Costa County Detention Facility/Richmond — Chaplain Installation Service

Churches and Institutions:

Black History Program:

Friendship Baptist Church/Vallejo

Ingleside United Presbyterian Church/San Francisco

McGee Avenue Baptist Church/Berkeley

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day:

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Sonoma County

Annual Career Day — Guest Mentor

Oakland High School/Oakland

St. Paul AME Church/Berkeley

Annual Revival

Theological Reflection — Guest Preacher

Allen Temple Baptist Church/Oakland

Hillside United Presbyterian Church/Oakland

Mother's Day Program

Religious and Cultural Traditions:

Assistance was given to the following:

Black United Clergy of Berkeley

Civil rights Coalition/San Francisco

Northern California Ecumenical Council

Interfaith Network of Clergy in the Bay Area

United Methodist Witness for Peace/Bay Area

Wo'se Community Church/Oakland

Best Resort Youth Home/Berkeley

East Oakland Clergy

Baptist Pastors & Ministers' Conference

United Together Housing Program

Death Penalty Focus/San Francisco

Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Coalition/Berkeley

Miles Cutter Laboratory-Community Relations/Berkeley

A.I.D.S. (AIDS Indigent Direct Services)/San Francisco

Rural & Urban Mission — World Council of Churches

Afro-American Christian/Afro-American Muslim Dialogue

Alameda County Welfare Department/Oakland

St. Luke's Society — Installation Program/Oakland

Fund For Theological Education

Lobby For Individual Freedom & Equality/Sacramento

Public Outreach:

1. Summer Research Opportunity Program/University of California, Berkeley. The program is designed to entice top undergraduate students of color from around the nation to select careers as university professors. Students are assigned a faculty mentor who supervises their research. The director of CUBS has supervised four students: an African American researching the Black Church as a liberative force; a Native American Indican exploring the psychological influence of assimilation on Native American assessment of two forms of healing: religion and tribal medicine; a Latina developing liberation theology from a Latina perspective; and an African American researching the meaning of the slave spirituals.
2. "Conversations with Howard Thurman" (videocassette). A video presentation with the late Dr. Howard Thurman, distinguished Black religious thinker, author of 21 books and co-founder of the first interracial and interfaith church in the United States, the Church For The Fellowship of All Peoples located in San Francisco.

3. "A Call To Action" — The Black Church & Community Economic Development: A Conference co-sponsored with the California Community Economic Development Association and the African-American Church Project, National Congress for Community Economic Development held at the Brookins AME Church in Oakland. Held at Brookins AME Church in Oakland, the conference was sponsored by the California Community Economic Development Association and the African-American Church Project National Congress for Community Economic Development.
4. Spring Lecture by Dr. Randall C. Bailey, entitled "White Supremacy in Biblical Interpretation." This event was co-sponsored with the Racial Ethnic Faculty Association of the GTU.
5. Teach-In: "The Rodney King Injustice:" The Teach-In was organized to reddress the anger and frustrations of the religious and local communities after the Simi Valley jury verdict. Twelve speakers representing various religious affiliations spoke with fervor about the racism, economic inequities, and the unrest that permeate the country.
6. Provided Black Clergy with assess with GTU Library by the fee waived.

IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

The steps did not take place in neat chronological order. Neither can it be said that the changes at the GTU directly resulted from the model. It is clear that the model was part of the planting while God yielded the increase.

The Model suffered severely in terms of leadership, organization, implementation, and evaluation due to the dismantling of the Center for Urban-Black Studies. It could not play the role of center or core for including Africentrism in theological education at the GTU in a more holistic and integral fashion.

WHAT WAS LEARNED

O my Father, what was it like to be stripped of all supports of life save the beating of the heart and the ebb and flow of fetid air in the lung? In a strange moment, when you suddenly caught your breath, did some intimation from the future give to your spirits a hint of promise? In the darkness did you hear the silent feet of your children; beating a melody of freedom to words which you would never know, in a land in which your bones would be warmed again in the depths of the cold earth in which you will sleep unknown, unrealized and alone.[98]

The following information was learned from the process of designing, implementing, and evaluating the model:

1. The process was exacerbated by the fact that there are no Africentrists in administrative decision-making positions at any of the nine seminaries or the GTU administration itself. There are no presidents or deans who are African American or products of Africentric educations or ministries. As a result, an adversarial relationship exists between decision-makers and those advocating change. There could have been greater success if there had been "insiders" with vision about and dedication of Africentric education and ministry.
2. The decision-making processes at the GTU are complex and can be effectively and deceptively utilized to avoid the assumption of responsibility. While there is much cooperation among the member schools of the consortium, each is independent, separately incorporated, and accountable to denominational judicatories and other sources of funding. Africentrism is not one of their priorities.
3. Motivating the GTU to embrace the programs projected is a sensitive undertaking. Essential to its success is the involvement of people from different sectors of the theological community as well as the larger community. Dialogue and understanding

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[98]Thurman, 200.

of the context of ministry are critical. Those in power need to feel that support and ennoblement will result from a decision to change.

4. The imbalance of power between those in power and those who seek to influence them corrodes the integrity of the relationship. It sustains racism and degrades human personality.
5. The Black Church community is not monolithic in its acceptance of Africentrism. Many from this community are Eurocentric.
6. Many in the Black Church community mistrust the GTU while hoping it will become more inclusive and effective in educating seminarians to deal with the complexities of the Urban-Black context.
7. It is important to have strategies; but, they should not be final. There is a Spirit that often moves in unaccountable and powerful ways to bring about change when none seemed possible, i.e., a way out of no way.
8. The potential for individual self aggrandizement can thwart against the empowerment of the Black community.
9. It is possible to find common ground within great diversity of backgrounds, experience, needs, and aspirations.
10. Having to develop a model for ministry is extremely helpful in organizing and influencing change.

CONCLUSIONS

On April 15, 1993, the staff of the Center For Urban-Black Studies received correspondence from the chairperson of the organization's board of directors indicating that the organization would be closed in thirty days due to lack of funds. This was shocking news. The staff could not even collect unemployment insurance since the Center did not pay into the system. On an organizational level it meant the demise of a Black organization that had survived for nearly twenty-five years.

Efforts were made to save the organization. A meeting attended by several of the Context Associates and other ministers who have been supportive of the Center's programming was called. Initial conversations focused on a name change and the development of a new board of directors. Ideas for raising funds were put forth. One of the Black GTU professors raised the question of replacing the staff. He indicated that he knew the GTU president and his wishes.

A second meeting was called. Plans for fundraising were projected. Timing was bad. Most budgets had no leverage for contributions to outside organizations by this time of the year. In addition many of the Context Associates and other supporters were beginning their national denominational meetings. The Summer was a difficult time to hold the group and their commitments together.

The Racial Ethnic Faculty Association expressed some concern to the GTU regarding support for CUBS The same Black professor stated that he had heard, presumably from the GTU, that there might not be a CUBS in the Fall.

In October, 1993, the Center made a request to the GTU for temporary funding — for three months — to allow the staff and supporters of the Center to continue their efforts to reorganize and secure funding. The request was denied. In January, 1994, a request for assistance from the GTU development office was also denied. The GTU president then proceeded to appoint a committee chaired by the same Black professor — "bush captain" — to design a CUBS program dealing with the Black Church.

Clearly, the problems of the Center presented the GTU with the opportunity that it had wanted for many years to dismantle the Center. This was the first time it had found a Black professor so eager to be of service.

It is this type of racism that precludes the GTU from embracing Africentrism as a significant component of theological education. The GTU is located in one of the most racially diverse areas in the nation. Still there are no Black presidents, vice-presidents, deans, directors of admissions or financial aid, registrars, or any top administrators. When the writer began attending Pacific School of Religion in 1968 women were similarly invisible. While sexism continues to be perpetuated at the GTU, there are presidents, vice presidents, deans and other top administrators who are women (Black women, however, are not among them, not even as faculty). Concerted efforts were made to confront this injustice of sexism. Similar efforts have not been undertaken to deal with African-Americans. At a meeting of the Racial Ethnic Faculty Association an Asian American professor declared that their numbers had increased at the expense of Blacks. In his paper, Robert Kimball had articulated that the mere existence of the Center warranted financial support, even if it did nothing. He understood its prophetic witness to racial abuse and the powerful and creative movement of the spirit among those who had been so abused. He was rare in this understanding of the violence that had occurred over the years against CUBS staff and the communities they represented as well as

the violence against the souls of those so controlled by the need to control the voices of the disinherited.

The closing of the Center was a tragedy. It denied authentic Black presence, significant resources to the Black community and the white religious community, and correctives for the miseducation and maltraining of ministers. The anticipation of common ground emerging out of people struggling together with the preconceptions, pains, problems and potential produced by their different racial heritages was aborted.

It affirmed that those with institutional power at the GTU would continue to be the authorities, that they would continue to validate or invalidate the histories and needs of the others, and that the insurrection of subjugated knowledge would be betrayed. Until the passion, anger, and hope of Blacks can be accepted in their authenticity, the GTU and its member seminaries will continue to make only token gestures to blackenize its education. This will not be Africentrism.

The arrogance of Eurocentrists must be transformed into a spirit of cooperation and respect in order for Africentrism to be established as an integral part of the GTU.

The hope of Black ministers and other members of the larger Black community would be better served by establishing relationships with seminaries that have shown a commitment to Africentric theological education. These would include: United Theological Seminary, Virginia Union School of Theology, and Howard University School of Divinity. The goal is to establish the best approach to prepare ministers to meet the tremendous needs of the Black community.

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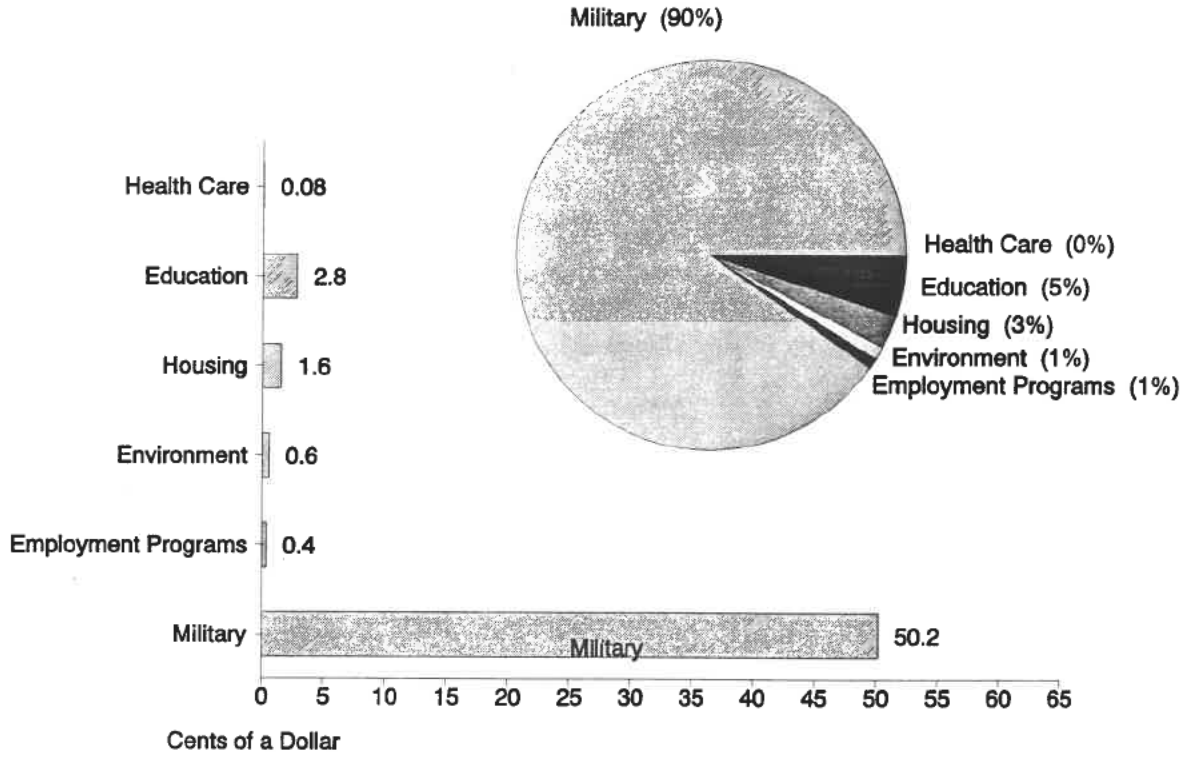
APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Is This How CALIFORNIA Should Spend Its Federal Tax Dollars?

In 1990, the average **CALIFORNIA** household spent $3,089 in federal income taxes, including:

$1,550.68	on the Military
$274.92	on Health Care
$86.49	on Education
$48.50	on Housing
$19.77	on Environmental Protection
$12.97	on Job Training



Appendix 2

A $15.9 BILLION-DOLLAR DISINVESTMENT:

Can California Afford More of the Same?

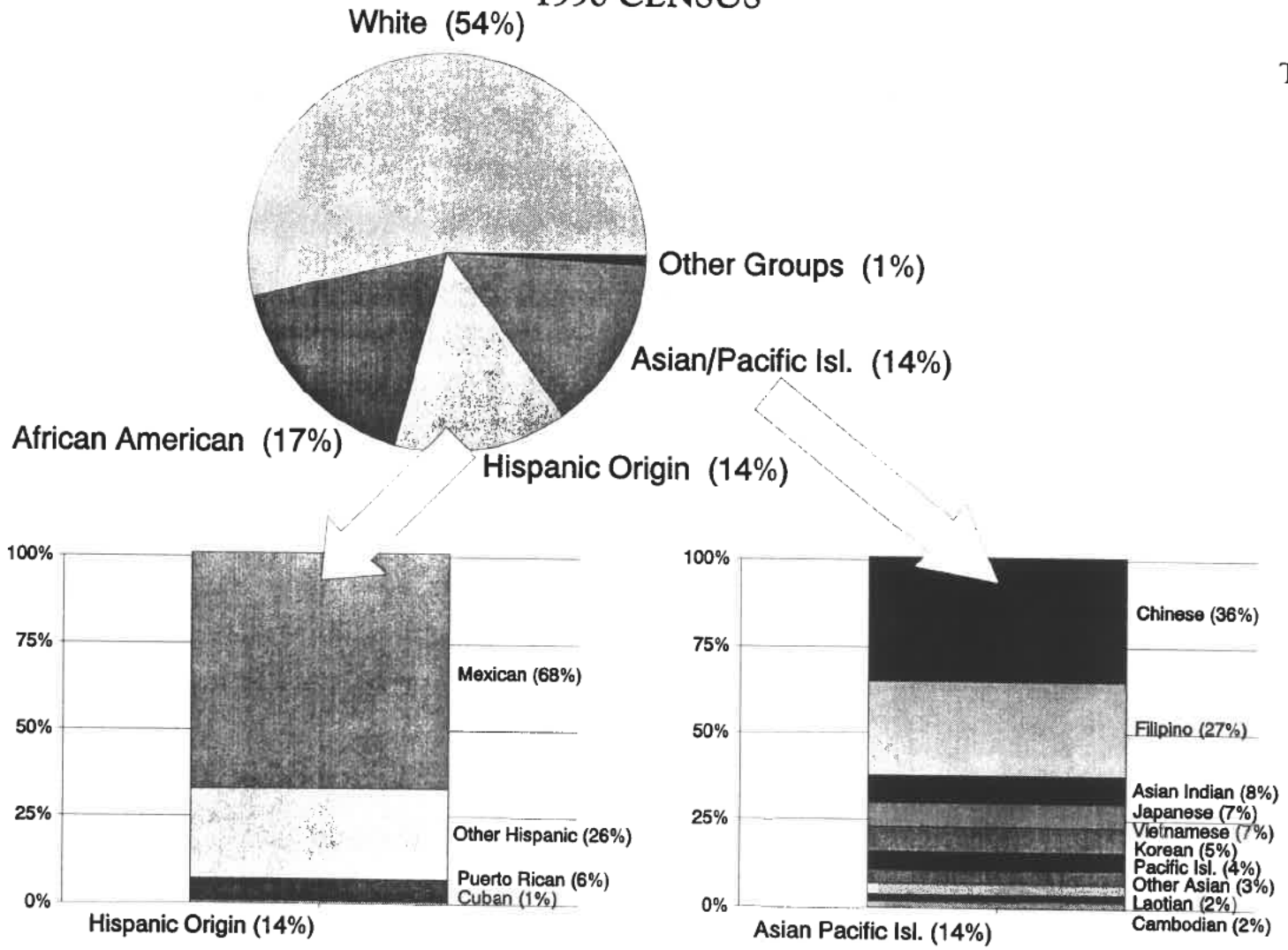
Between 1981 and 1989, California lost $15.9 billion in federal social spending. A Middle East war will put immense pressures on Washington to make further cuts in order to hold down the deficit. If the full brunt of a war were borne by social program cuts, California's losses would amount to another $6.1 billion. This year, the state already faces a deficit of $1.5 billion.

The people of this state have pressing needs:	**But in ten years, the federal government has:**
· 58 percent of renters pay over 30 percent of their income in rent...	· cut housing programs $1.3 billion.
· The high school dropout...	· cut education programs by $1.3 billion.
· 20 percent of residents can't afford health insurance...	· cut health care programs by $2 billion.
· Youth unemployment statewide is 16 percent...	· cut job training programs by $4.7 billion.
· Our highways and bridges are falling apart...	· cut revenue sharing by $2 billion.

Appendix 3

ALAMEDA COUNTY ETHNICITY
1990 CENSUS

Total = 1,279,182



Detailed census data for persons of other Hispanic origin are not currently available.

Appendix 4

HOUSING

PEOPLE IN POVERTY									
	Alameda County	Contra Costa County	Oakland	Berkeley	Richmond	San Leandro	Hayward	Emeryville	Alameda
Total Population	1,279,182	803,732	372,242	102,724	87,425	68,223	111,498	5,740	76,459
People in Poverty	132,011	57,867	68,781	16,370	13,909	3,375	10,640	857	4,662
Percentage	10.3%	7.2%	18.5%	15.9%	15.9%	4.9%	9.5%	14.9%	6.1%
Per capita income	$17,547	$20,748	$14,676	$18,720	$14,630	$17,563	$15,048	$23,190	$19,833

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Association of Bay Area Governments

APPENDIX 5

DRAFT

Graduate Theological Union

The Howard Thurman Lectureship

The Graduate Theological Union (GTU) of Berkeley and the Howard Thurman Educational Trust of San Francisco are pleased to announce the establishment of an endowed lectureship in honor of Howard Thurman, The Howard Thurman Lectureship.

Dr. Howard Thurman, a major religious voice of the twentieth century, was committed to educational, social, and theological perspectives which transcend the narrow confines of racial, ethnic and religious origins. He authored 21 books, served as chaplain at Howard and Boston Universities, and founded the Church for the Fellowship of All People in San Francisco. His spiritual and theological impact on the twentieth century is profound.

The Graduate Theological Union, a major consortial center for theological studies, clergy education, and applied research in religion and science and society, includes nine Protestant and Catholic seminaries and eleven inter-faith, multi-cultural, and research centers. Affiliated with the University of California, Berkeley, the GTU is committed to theological studies and dialogue grounded in the reality of religious plurality, a plurality which defines the context in which contemporary persons think and work and live and believe.

The Howard Thurman Educational Trust, established in 1961 as a public charitable foundation, seeks to advance the wisdom and vision of Howard Thurman through practical and inspirational educational programs, as well as through scholarly research and study.

The first Howard Thurman Lectureship will be scheduled for March 1995 and the lectures will continue in each subsequent spring. This event will consist of three lectures, one at the GTU, one at an East Bay community facility, and the third atthe Church of the Fellowship of All People. The series aims to increase directly and indirectly the awareness of Dr. Thurman's teachings and philosophy, to stimulate more dialogue between races, genders, and other communities of difference, and to connect biography with history and faith. An interfaith reception will precede the opening of each series. The lecturer will be a national or international figure. The lecturer will be invited to assume a brief residency (onie to three weeks) at the GTU and the Educational Trust as part of the lectureship.

In preparation for each lecture series, a workshop on the life and work of Howard Thurman will be held at the GTU. One of the components of this workshop will be the presentation and discussion of a scholarly paper written by a student of the GTU. Thurman Scholars, those whose papers are accepted for presentation, will be invited to attend this workshop.

As the Lectureship is established and becomes known, it is hoped that a significant Howard Thurman Scholarship Fund can also be established.

APPENDIX 6

HOWARD THURMAN ENDOWED LECTURESHIP
Graduate Theological Union and
Howard Thurman Education Trust

Proposed Chronology of Events

May 1994 — August 1994

Raising of $20,000; invitation of lecturer, committee organization and networking.

Mid-September 1994

Announcement of endowed lectureship and first lecturer.

October 1994 — January 1995

Publicity and Planning.

February — May 1995

GTU course on Howard Thurman.

March 1-3, 1995

Faculty-Student Seminar.
Community Workshop

March 6-17, 1995

Two weeks for inaugural reception, three lectures, and residency of lecturer.

APPENDIX 7

RSHS 2225: Race, Church, Social Theory: Asian American and Black Perspectives

Monday — 12:40-3:30 p.m. JSTB 1
Instructors: Sandra Blair and Young Mi Pak 9 (GTU)
Spring, 1994

OBJECTIVE:

The purpose of this course is to offer students who are preparing for ministry a broader perspective of race in the US churches by going beyond the white-black paradigm to include the dialogue between the Asian American and African American experiences. Through the course readings, discussions and assignments, students will have an opportunity to explore their personal understanding of the complexity of racial issues as well as to expand their cross-racial/ethnic horizons.

Historical experiences of each group in the broader, U.S. society will be covered; and racial experiences common to both will be identified and discussed. We will consider: 1) how white racism not only has shaped and divided the Asian-American and African-American experiences but also has created common bonds that both groups need to understand in order to enhance interaction and dialogue between themselves; 2) how at the same time Asian-Americans and African-Americans have applied Christian faith and practices to confront racial oppression.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Do the required readings in preparation for each week's class.
2. Attendance and participation in class discussions.

3. A 2-3 page reflection essay that includes personal experiences related to race and identifies some primary issues of the course topics that a students would like to explore. This paper will not be graded but will serve as a point of reference for developing individual student perspectives. (Due week 3.)
4. A one page proposal for a research paper and a tentative bibliography. (Due week 7.)
5. Evaluate for class discussion inculturation issues based on a visit to an African-American or Asian-American church. (Due week 10.)
6. A 3-5 page annotated bibliography which includes no more than 10 books/articles on Asian/African Americans pertaining to the course topics and/or student's research topic. (Due week 11.)
7. A 10-15 page research or project paper which can be done either individually or collaboratively. Students may choose, for example:
   - to critically examine their respective denominational policy statements on race and propose revisions aimed at fostering dialogue between African-Americans and Asian-Americans.
   - to do a case study of a local church or a religious organization which fosters interracial dialogue, especially in the Bay Area.
   - to do a comparative historical or topical analysis of African-American and Asian-American experiences pertaining to the relationship betweenrace and religion.
   - to examine and critique racial theories with reference to Asian-American and African-American.
   - to examine how race and ethnicity has been addressed in theological education. (Due the last day of the semester)
8. Class presentation of students' research projects. (Final two classes)

GRADING:

The final grade will be based on 1) the written assignments — annotated bibliography (10%) and the final paper (40%); 2) class participation (50%) reflecting student input of a quality and value that enhances cross-cultural dialogue and understanding.

SCHEDULE:

The readings listed below will be used for the instructors' preparation of lectures and the required course readings will be selected from among them.

Week 1	(1/31):	Introduction and Overview: The History of Race in America
Week 2	(2/7):	Contemporary Race Relations Models
Week 3	(2/14):	History: African Americans
Week 4	(2/21):	No Class (President's Day)
Week 5	(2/28):	History: Asian Americans
Week 6	(3/7):	Emergence of African American Churches
Week 7	(3/14):	Asian American Ethnic Congregations
Week 8	(3/21):	Spring Recess
Week 9	(3/28):	Inculturation, Cultural Accommodation
Week 10	(4/4):	Religio-Political Responses: Civil Rights Movement
Week 11	(4/11):	Theological Responses to Race: Black/Womanist/Asian American Theologies
Week 12	(4/18):	Gender
Week 13	(4/25):	Issues in Asian- and African-American Relations
Week 14	(5/2):	Student presentations
Week 15	(5/9):	Student presentations
Week 16	(5/16):	No Class. Papers Due.

APPENDIX 8

RSHS 2225: Race, Church, Social Theory: Asian American and Black Perspectives

COURSE TEXTS

Required Texts:

Brandt, Joseph. *Dismantling Racism: The Continuing Challenge to White America.* Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress, 1991.

Lincoln, C. Eric and Lawrence H. Mamiya. *The Black Church in the African American Experience.* Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1990.

Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960's to the 1980's.* London and New York: Routledge, 1986.

Takaki, Ronald. *Strangers From a Different Shore.* New York: Little, Brown, & Co., 1989.

Selected articles and documents on reserve at the GTU library.

Recommended Texts:

Asian Women United of California, Ed. Making Waves: *An Anthology of Writings by and about Asian American Women.* Boston: Beacon Press, 1989.

Bennett, Lerone J. *Before the Mayflower: History of Black America.* Fifth edition. New York: Penguin Books, 1982.

Davis, Angela Y. *Women, Race and Class.* New York: Vintage Books, 1983.

APPENDIX 9

THE CENTER FOR URBAN-BLACK STUDIES

Affiliated with the Graduate Theological Union

2465 LeCONTE AVENUE · BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94709 · (415) 841-8401

COURSE NO. RS236

COURSE TITLE: The Future of Urban Ministry

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The course will promote leadership development within the context of urban ministry through classroom participation and visits to actual sites of urban ministry such as Glide Church. Examination of the dynamics of race and power will beessential. Theological implications of the sociology of urban America for the 21st Century Church and society will also be assessed.

MEETING DAY & TIME: Thursday, 7:10 — 9:40

INSTRUCTOR: Dorsey O. Blake